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# "Frankenstein" meets "Emile": philosophical hermeneutics, "Women's Ways of Knowing", and the educational experience

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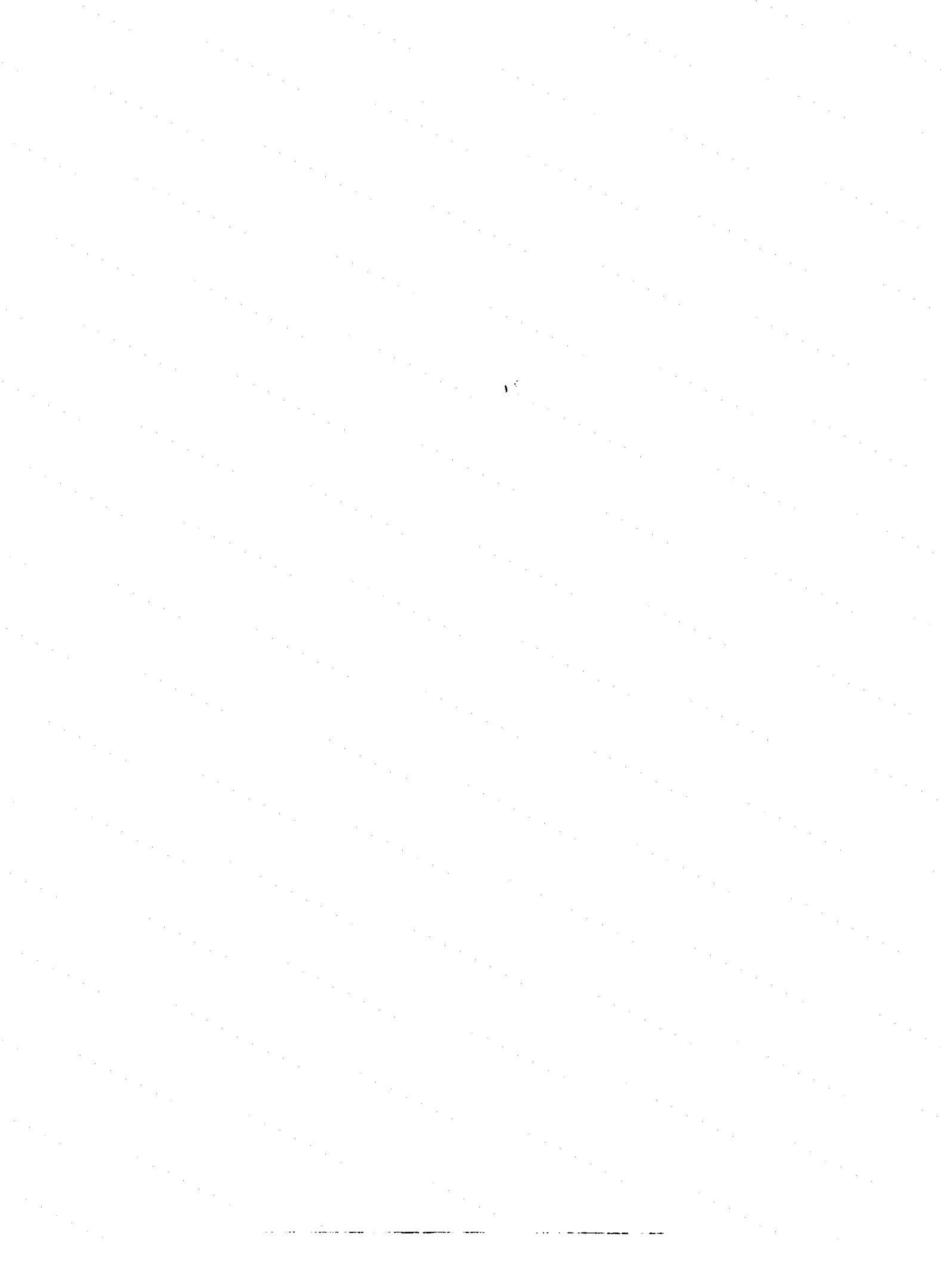
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**"Frankenstein" meets "Emile": Philosophical hermeneutics,  
"Women's Ways of Knowing", and the educational experience**

**Malless, Stan, Ph.D.**

**Iowa State University, 1994**

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***Frankenstein meets Emile:***

**Philosophical hermeneutics, *Women's Ways of Knowing*, and the  
educational experience**

**by**

**Stan Malless**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the  
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

"He could not, Himself, make a second self  
To be his mate - as well have made Himself."  
-- R. Browning, *Caliban Upon Setebos*

The somewhat "Hollywoodesque" title of this dissertation can be easily misunderstood. It would not be difficult, for example, to miss the italics which indicate that the *Frankenstein* and the *Emile* referred to are not the *characters* in the respective works but are, in fact, the *works* themselves, Mary Shelley's novel (1818) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *histoire* (1762). Why this seemingly innocuous misunderstanding takes place is one of the central problems with which this thesis is concerned, for latent in that initial reading of "*Frankenstein* meets *Emile*" are the key ideas which formulate the question to which this thesis is an answer: "What would it mean for modern educational theory if the educational experience were understood as a "continuous reconstruction"<sup>1</sup> of the complementary reciprocation<sup>2</sup> between the ontology of philosophical hermeneutics and the epistemology of *Women's Ways of Knowing*?"<sup>3</sup> And this is

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<sup>1</sup>John Dewey defines education as "the continuous reconstruction of experience." See *Experience and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), 87. We will have more to say about this in Chapter 3.

<sup>2</sup>"Reciprocation" is intended as an echo of Gadamer's use of the phrase "a texture of reciprocal effects" in the context of a discussion of historical consciousness: "The effect (*Wirkung*) of a living tradition and the effect of historical study must constitute a unity of effect, the analysis of which would reveal only a texture of reciprocal effects." See *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald Marshall (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 282-83. (All subsequent reference to Gadamer will be from this source unless otherwise stated.)

<sup>3</sup>M. Belenky, B. Clinchy, N. Goldberger, and J. Tarule, *Women's Ways of Knowing* (New York:



really asking several things: First, "What sort of educational experience is contingent upon a philosophy of education that is essentially hermeneutical?" Second, "In what ways can philosophical hermeneutics be complemented so as to account for gender issues?" Third, "How can the critique of gender be complemented by philosophical hermeneutics, reciprocally, so that one does not supercede the other?" And last, "How plausible is this philosophy of education as a counterweight to the monomethodologism of modern educational practice?"<sup>4</sup> The "key ideas" that are latent in these questions form the bases for the next three chapters,

"Understanding," "Experience," and "*Bildung*." And why *Frankenstein*

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Basic Books, 1986). Hereafter in the text as *Women's Ways*.

<sup>4</sup>As I explain in Chapter 4, modern education has collapsed practical judgment (what Aristotle refers to as *phronesis*) into technical know-how (or *techné*). Practical judgment belongs to the realm of "tact," of the "extrascientific experiences" that Gadamer associates with the four "guiding concepts of humanism": "Bildung," "taste," "sensus communis," and "judgment." And this is also where Gadamer connects with *Women's Ways*, for these are the key concepts that best illustrate the impropriety or "abuse of method," not only in the human sciences but also in the course of everyday human experience and in the educational experience of "constructed knowing" and "connected teaching." What we mean by the impropriety of method is that since any given method is supposedly derived from a "universal" principle, the application of that method would be invariant regardless of the situation, which is to say, tactless and therefore inappropriate. For example, someone who is taught a second language from a series of outdated audiotapes and who has had no other contact with that language (as was and still is the case in many of the former communist bloc countries and China), the result would be mere parroting, i.e. an "uncultivated" use of the language. The language user would have no "sixth sense" of *how* to use the language at the right time in the right place. In other words, the parroting would be applied *techné* without concern for the practical judgment of *phronesis*. It would not require any sense of taste, common sense, or practical judgment for its application, which is to say that tact, because it is *not* a *techné*, cannot be taught. And as we will see in Chapter 2, if we take this example as a "microtext" for the whole of our modern technological culture, and specifically for modern educational practices, this is the situation that we must come to terms with; for, as we are all aware, "method" in this context can be synonymous with an abusive and methodical, negative prejudice. And this leads up to the point that I am trying to make in the dissertation itself: knowing how to use *techné* at the right time in the right place (or *phronesis*) can be understood as the complementarity of Gadamer's "tact" and *Women's Ways*' "constructed knowledge."

and *Emile* are meeting as they are and *what* their meeting has to do with hermeneutics, feminism, and education will be the explicit topic of Chapter 5, which can be thought of as a metaphor or "microtext" for the implicit theme of the entire work.<sup>5</sup> In Chapter 6, we will describe several classroom practices derived from our thesis.

But in order to meet *Frankenstein* and *Emile* in this larger context, we will need a working knowledge of hermeneutics in general and of philosophical hermeneutics in particular as a kind of alternating current which will connect us to the problem of "truth" and "method" in education. To that end, the rest of this chapter will introduce us to the following: 1) Hans-Georg Gadamer, 2) hermeneutics, 3) Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics and the rationale for it in an educational context, 4) the role of hermeneutics in education, 5) a brief preview of the chapters to follow, 6) a statement of the question (problem) to which this dissertation is an answer, and finally, 7) a return to the meeting of *Frankenstein* and *Emile* by way of a discussion of the "monstrous imagination."

Although it might seem more appropriate to begin with a survey of what is and what has been meant by the word "hermeneutics" and then move on to an introduction to Gadamer and an explanation of

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<sup>5</sup>Chapter 5 as "microtext" of the "theme" that is implicit in the entire work reflects the synecdochical or part-to-whole nature of hermeneutics itself and is at the heart of my thesis. Gadamer talks about it in terms of the "dialectic of the word . . . there is another dialectic of the word, which accords to every word an inner dimension of multiplication: every word breaks forth as if from a center and is related to a whole, through which alone it is a word. Every word causes the whole of the language to which it belongs to resonate and the whole worldview that underlies it to appear. Thus every word, as the event of the moment, carries with it the unsaid, to which it is related by responding and summoning." See Gadamer, 458.

Gadamerian hermeneutics, I find that it is almost impossible to talk about hermeneutics without referring to Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900 - ), the contemporary German philosopher or "hermeneutic theorist," whose thought dominates much of this work.<sup>6</sup>

The son of a professor of chemistry, Gadamer was educated in the Classical German tradition of philology,<sup>7</sup> the study of which developed into an ardent devotion to the dialogue-poetry of Plato which culminated in his "habilitation thesis on Plato's dialectical ethics, written for Heidegger in 1927 and 1928." But Gadamer's work with Heidegger actually began in 1923. In a revealing passage from his autobiographical *Philosophical Apprenticeships*, he recounts that experience: ". . . after an attack of polio and as an immature doctor of philosophy and all-too-young husband, I went to Freiburg for a semester to study with Heidegger, naturally I also attended the lectures and seminars of Husserl."<sup>8</sup>

In 1960, nearly forty years later, at the age of sixty, this former student of Heidegger and Husserl, a distinguished university professor

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<sup>6</sup>The phrase is Allan Megill's. See his *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), 20-21. Commenting on the development of his thesis that postmodernism developed out of the work of these four "prophets of extremity," Megill says that "I was for a time tempted to include a major consideration of Gadamer in the present study. . . but decided against dealing with [him] because, finally, he rejects the notion of radical crisis. In Gadamer's view, life as it is actually lived has its own forms of solidarity, which persist even in the face of the hubris and confusion of the intellectuals." This position is, in fact, exactly why I have made Gadamer's work the focus of this thesis. It is his "moderate hermeneutics" that makes the complementarity of Dewey, *Women's Ways*, and the educational experience possible.

<sup>7</sup>For most of us today, "philology" would be something like a hybridization of rhetoric, communication studies, literary theory, linguistics, and Ancient Greek.

<sup>8</sup>Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Apprenticeships*, trans. Robert R. Sullivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), x and 35. (Note that Heidegger's *Being and Time* was published in 1927.)

and beloved teacher in his own right (the Universities of Marburg, Leipzig, Frankfurt, and Heidelberg, respectively), published his second book and major work, *Wahrheit und Methode*, a work described as "one of the two or three most important works of this century on the philosophy of humanistic studies."<sup>9</sup> The first English translation (based on a second German edition) was published in 1975 as *Truth and Method*, and a second, revised English edition, based on the 1986 revised and expanded fifth German edition was published in 1989 and is the text to which all reference will be made in this study.

But this is not to suggest that this is all Gadamer wrote or all that he is known for. His lectures, essays, and articles have been collected in a number of English translations, and his collected works in German are projected for ten volumes, of which seven have appeared. However, he is known perhaps more popularly -- at least in academic circles -- as a result of his debates with Jurgen Habermas and with Jacques Derrida.<sup>10</sup> But Gadamer's influence has spread beyond the postmodernist debate. As Joel Weinsheimer, one of the translators of *Truth and Method* puts it, "Gadamer's thought has left its mark everywhere among the human sciences -- in sociology, literary theory, history, theology, law -- and indeed in philosophy of

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<sup>9</sup>Joel Weinsheimer, trans., "Introduction to *Truth and Method*" (New York: Crossroad, 1989), xi.

<sup>10</sup>See Jurgen Habermas, "A Review of Gadamer's *Truth and Method*" and Gadamer's response "On the Scope and Function of Hermeneutical Reflection" both in Brice R. Wachterhauser, ed., *Hermeneutics and Modern Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1986). Also see Diane P. Michelfelder and Richard Palmer, eds., *Dialogue and Deconstruction: The Gadamer-Derrida Encounter* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989).

natural science." To that list I would add the field of education.<sup>11</sup>

Gadamer's long and distinguished career as a teacher, philosopher, and cultural historian, notwithstanding, he is first and foremost read as a hermeneutic theorist, but it is in this role, ironically, that he is least understood -- ironically first because hermeneutics has been traditionally associated with the art of understanding, and secondly because *Truth and Method* is, among other things, a detailed history of hermeneutics itself. Gadamer himself acknowledges that, "Hermeneutics is a word which most people do not know and do not need to know. But they are nevertheless affected by the hermeneutic experience and not exempted. They too try to take something as something and finally to understand everything around them and to act accordingly."<sup>12</sup> One suspects that the main reason for this misunderstanding is due to a certain contextual ambiguity (associations with the even more ambiguous postmodernism), as well as to the literal strangeness of the word "hermeneutics." A recently published text in philosophical foundations of education,<sup>13</sup> for example, makes this comment about one of the "persistent problems" presented by hermeneutics and phenomenology taken together as a movement: ". . . the difficulty many people have . . . with its reliance on hard-to-translate Germanic

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<sup>11</sup> Joel Weinsheimer, *Gadamer's Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), ix.

<sup>12</sup> Dieter Misgeld and Graeme Nicholson, eds., *Hans-Georg Gadamer on Education, Poetry, and History* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 233.

<sup>13</sup> Howard A. Ozmon and Samuel M. Craver, eds., *Philosophical Foundations of Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1990), 261.

terms and its penchant for hyphenated expressions create comprehension problems for many readers." So before we close in on Gadamer's version of hermeneutics -- what he calls "philosophical hermeneutics" -- and its relevance to the educational experience, we need to clarify what we mean by "hermeneutics" in its broadest sense.

Etymologically rooted in the Ancient Greek word *hermeios* "hermeneutics" refers "to the priest at the Delphic oracle, [and] the more common verb *hermeneuein* and noun *hermeneia* point back to the wing-footed messenger-god Hermes from whose name the words are apparently derived (or vice versa?). Significantly, Hermes is associated with the function of transmuting what is beyond human understanding and into a form that human intelligence can grasp."<sup>14</sup> Kurt Mueller-Vollmer takes this image of Hermes-the-translator a step further: "In order to deliver the messages of the gods, Hermes had to be conversant in their idiom as well as in that of the mortals for whom the message was destined. He had to understand and interpret for himself what the gods wanted to convey before he could proceed to translate, articulate, and explicate their intention to mortals."<sup>15</sup> But maybe more to the point of those alleged comprehension (interpretation?) problems posed by the concept of hermeneutics, we must remember that Hermes, even as an Olympian,

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<sup>14</sup>See Richard Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), 13. (Pages 12-32 give one of the best introductions to subject.)

<sup>15</sup>Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, ed., *The Hermeneutics Reader* (New York: Continuum, 1992), 1.

was constantly changing his role, like the quicksilver with which he would be later associated by the Romans and by the alchemists (who, remember, were the magician-followers of that obscure incarnation Hermes Trimegistus). One is tempted to think of Hermes as the god of uncertainty, where "uncertainty" carries with it the proverbial understanding that nothing is certain save the uncertainty of fate. Consequently, whenever anyone attempts to "define" hermeneutics -- especially in the thin air of today's postmodernist atmosphere -- one might as well try to see the wind (of which Hermes was also a deity).<sup>16</sup> But this is to get ahead of ourselves by anticipating a point that will be emphasized later in this chapter and the chapters to follow. For now, we can put our feet back on the hermeneutical ground, so to speak, by briefly summarizing how hermeneutics has been applied in the context of recent intellectual history.

In spite of the fact that *Webster's New World Dictionary: Third College Edition* defines hermeneutics *only* as "the art or science of the interpretation of literature,"<sup>17</sup> Professor Palmer has shown us that

As it has evolved in modern times, the field of hermeneutics has been defined in at least six fairly distinct ways. From the beginning the word has denoted the science of interpretation, especially the principles of textual exegesis, but the field of hermeneutics has been interpreted (in roughly chronological order) as: 1) the theory of biblical exegesis; 2) general philological methodology; 3) the science of all linguistic understanding; 4) the methodological foundation of *Geisteswissenschaften*; 5) phenomenology of

<sup>16</sup>Note that the illustration at the beginning of *Emile's* Book III represents Hermes engraving the elements of the sciences on columns (Bloom, 38).

<sup>17</sup>Victoria Neufeldt, ed., *Webster's New World Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 632.

existence and of existential understanding; and 6) the systems of interpretation, both recollective and iconoclastic, used by man to reach the meaning behind myths and symbols.<sup>18</sup>

And at the risk of understating what is a long and theoretically complex evolution of the concept but also knowing the background needs of this study, we can paraphrase Palmer's version of the history of hermeneutics in a fashion that is somewhat loosely based on Richard Rorty's version of the history of philosophy as he tells it in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*.<sup>19</sup> The linchpin in our paraphrase will be the concept of "spirit" as a metaphor for that which is to be interpreted. But this is "spirit" not in any ahistorical, biblical, or metaphysical sense. It is more in line conceptually with the "spirit" of the spirit/letter metaphor that the letter kills, but the spirit gives life (or that we follow either the "spirit" or the "letter" of the law).

Given this metaphorical frame, then, Palmer's first category, the "theory of biblical exegesis" approach to hermeneutics, would be described as the rules and methods for interpreting Spirit (with a capital "S"), so that the "letter" is a construct of the Spirit, and would be analogous to the original "messenger" function of Hermes as interpreter of the gods. The main feature of this approach is its dogmatic reliance on the part-whole assumption that the New

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<sup>18</sup>Palmer, 33.

<sup>19</sup>Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).



Testament is a whole unto itself. Martin Luther (1483-1546) is the representative hermeneuticist in this stage.

The second type of hermeneutics, coinciding with the Enlightenment and represented by Friedrich Ast (1778-1841) and Friedrich August Wolf (1759-1824), "marks the beginning of a general hermeneutics" in which "every work of literature is to be interpreted in the same way according to the same rules."<sup>20</sup> Like biblical exegesis, this approach is still deterministic in that it is governed by a rigid methodology and a basic underlying assumption that inherent in the work itself is a spiritual unity that, under the correct conditions, can be revealed. In our terms, it would be the shift from the capital "S" Spirit to "spirit" in the lower case, but the letter (the pun is unintended) is still the construct of the spirit. To use Myron Abrams' turn of phrase, it is a shift from supernaturalism to "natural supernaturalism,"<sup>21</sup> where the secularized Spirit turns out to be the "spirit of the age." With this approach, the hermeneuticist's role is to discover, excavate, and to recreate meaning by thinking "backwards" through a historical-critical methodology until the interpreter himself is a participant in the unique "spirit" of the time. A significant point to remember here is that the general theory of philological method marks "the beginning of a general crisis in man's relation to his past. The mere fact that a theory of how works of the past should be understood is felt to be necessary indicates in itself

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<sup>20</sup>Guttorm Floristad, "Understanding Hermeneutics," *Inquiry* 16 (1973): 448.

<sup>21</sup>See M.H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: Norton, 1971).

that the smooth, unproblematic transmission of the tradition has come to an end, and moreover that the present itself has become a problem."<sup>22</sup>

As we move to the third approach, keep in mind that we have been discussing first a "theory," then a "method," and now, with Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), we begin to think in terms of a "science." Schleiermacher, in contrast to Ast and Wolf, who limited their hermeneutics to works of literature, widened the field of interpretation to all linguistic utterance, e.g. biblical, literary, and legal. What was unique about his method is that it was "psychological." That is, in order to reconstruct the "true" meaning of the work, it was not enough to identify oneself with the world of the text; one also had to identify with the author of the text, which meant to discover "what the author had in mind." Grammatical and syntactical considerations were still valid as "objective" measures, but now they were also the intersubjective medium of the author's "subjective" style. The hermeneuticist would still "divine" meaning, but in our terms, the spirit to be divined would be an "inspirit" as in an inspiration, a *psyche*, what Gadamer calls "the nodal point in the artist's mind."<sup>23</sup> But in spite of Schleiermacher's historical consciousness of individual expression, the letter is still the construct of the spirit, and a latent dogmatism persists in the

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<sup>22</sup>Florstad, 448. Note that it was during this time period that *Emile* and *Frankenstein* were written.

<sup>23</sup>Gadamer, 166.

conviction that it is possible to identify oneself with the author and the author's world-view.

From Schleiermacher we move to Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) who was Schleiermacher's biographer and the prolific expositor of hermeneutics as the methodological foundation of the *Geisteswissenschaften* or the "human sciences." Dilthey extended the field of hermeneutics beyond what Schleiermacher had proposed, namely literary, biblical, and legal texts, to include "all disciplines focused on understanding man's art, actions, and writings."<sup>24</sup> Specifically, Dilthey's project was to formulate a science of historical understanding that would do for the human sciences what Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* did for the natural sciences. In other words, he wanted to find a way to objectify what was non-objectifiable by proposing that history is made up of individuals and their life-experiences, and these life-experiences constitute an individual's life history in the same way that history can be said to be constituted by the accumulated life-experiences of all individuals. A life-experience, therefore, could be construed as something like the "molecular unit" of the human sciences from which all of history could be understood. Except for this turn, Dilthey's hermeneutics is basically Schleiermacher's approach but with the added difference that for Dilthey -- anticipating Heidegger's (and Gadamer's) ontological hermeneutics -- hermeneutics is inescapably bound up

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<sup>24</sup>Palmer, 41.

with temporality, and here we have our metaphor of spirit becoming a function of time and being, a function that begins the identificatory movement towards the fusion of spirit and letter. But even though we can see the hand writing on the wall, with Dilthey the letters are still from the spiritual hand -- the letter is still the construct of the spirit.

Palmer's fifth classification, which is organized around Heidegger's work, includes Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, and since we will be looking at that approach in some detail immediately after this general survey of hermeneutics, here, for the sake of continuity, only a few key points need be mentioned. This phenomenological/existential hermeneutics, in Palmer's words,<sup>25</sup> "refers neither to the science or rules of text interpretation nor to a methodology of the *Geisteswissenschaften* but to the phenomenological explication of human existing itself." What is foundational to this approach is the recognition that hermeneutics is ontological. This means that since "understanding" and "interpretation" are identified with the hermeneutical experience and, reciprocally, identify that experience, they are also existential modes of human "being-in-the-world." Gadamer takes this ontological direction one step further by arguing that Being is linguistic, and his thesis in *Truth and Method* is, in fact, "Being that can be understood is language." (*Sein, das verstanden werden kann, ist Sprache*.)<sup>26</sup> In

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 42.

<sup>26</sup>Gadamer, 474.

terms of the spirit/letter dichotomy, philosophical hermeneutics marks the fusion of the two, that is, spirit has become the construct of the letter (where letter is defined as language) and vice versa.

A final category, according to Palmer, defines hermeneutics as the "recollective or iconoclastic" systems for interpreting myths and symbols. He cites the work of Paul Ricoeur as representative of this mode of thought, and Ricoeur's phrase the "hermeneutics of suspicion" is probably the best description of the function of this type of hermeneutics, namely the critique of ideology.<sup>27</sup> However, at this point, Palmer's 1969 version needs to be modified to take into account the work of Habermas and Derrida. To that end, and as a way to sum up this entire section, we can defer to the broad categories suggested by Shaun Gallagher.<sup>28</sup> First, Gallagher combines the biblical/Schleiermacher/Dilthey approaches and labels them as "conservative hermeneutics," an approach that sees the aim of interpretation as "the reproduction of meaning or intention of the author by following well-defined hermeneutical canons that guide reading." He labels the work of Gadamer and Ricoeur as "moderate hermeneutics" and describes that approach as one wherein "no method can guarantee an absolutely objective interpretation of an author's work because, as readers, we are conditioned by prejudices of our own historical existence." He associates Heidegger and Derrida with the

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<sup>27</sup> See Gadamer's reply to Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutics of Suspicion," in *Hermeneutics*, ed. G. Shapiro and A. Sica (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 54, where Gadamer asks: "Is not every form of hermeneutics a form of overcoming an awareness of suspicion?"

<sup>28</sup> See Gallagher's *Hermeneutics and Education* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 9-11.

claims of "radical hermeneutics" that "reading is more a case of playing or dancing than a puritanical application of method," and that "original meaning is unattainable." He groups Habermas, Marx, and Freud, among others, in "critical hermeneutics," where hermeneutics is "employed as means of penetrating false consciousness, discovering the ideological nature of our belief systems, promoting distortion-free communication, and thereby accomplishing a liberating consensus." For our purposes, we might think of Palmer's sixth grouping as a combination of "critical" and "radical" hermeneutics. This means that its aim is iconoclastic, but for someone like Habermas, that iconoclasm has to result in an "emancipatory reflection." This is not the radical hermeneutics of deconstructing meaning but a destruction of false consciousness in order to bring about a power-free, ideology-free, liberating consensus. If we were to see this in spirit/letter terms, we would begin to witness an inverse relation, a movement into a kind of "negative space." Rather than the letter as construct of the spirit, the spirit has now become a construct of the letter, and hermeneutics, in Gadamer's phrase, has become "a protection against the abuse of method."<sup>29</sup>

So given this continuum of hermeneutical theory, what are the underlying assumptions for making the connection between hermeneutics and education? And what is it about Gadamer's

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<sup>29</sup>Misgeld, 70.

philosophical hermeneutics (in Gallagher's terms, a "moderate hermeneutics") that precludes the other hermeneutic theories as the basis for a theory of education? And how, exactly, will "moderate hermeneutics" address the problem with which this hermeneutical approach to education is concerned? The next three chapters will take up all three of these questions in general but will specifically attempt to answer the first two by focusing on three traditional elements of educational theory, which are, as Georgia Warnke has demonstrated,<sup>30</sup> also the key elements of Gadamer's hermeneutics: 1) the role of *understanding* as a hermeneutical principle and its affinities with what we will be calling "tacit hermeneutical pedagogies";<sup>31</sup> 2) Gadamer's concept of *experience*, which is advanced in the context of Dewey's insistence<sup>32</sup> that a philosophy of education must rely on a theory of experience and that "philosophy is the theory of education in its most general phases." Our purpose here will be to show how Gadamer can supplement Dewey and underwrite the compatibility of a continental philosophical hermeneutics with a philosophy of education in a liberal democracy; and 3) *Bildung*, the German word for "acculturation," discussed in terms of *Women's Ways*' "constructed knowledge" as the "meeting" of hermeneutical

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<sup>30</sup>Georgia Warnke, *Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition, and Reason* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 167-174.

<sup>31</sup>Representative of this educational approach are "the pedagogies of understanding" (Perkins, Cohen, Egan), "the pedagogy of care" (Noddings), "connected teaching" (Belenky et al), "dialogic teaching" (Reinsmith), "constructivism" (Brooks and Brooks), educational theories and practices that are explicitly and/or implicitly derived from Gadamer's hermeneutics, and "the pedagogy of the oppressed" (Freire). We will discuss these in more detail in the next chapter.

<sup>32</sup>John Dewey, *Democracy of Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), 331.

understanding and experience.<sup>33</sup> The chapter then leads us into what can be construed as Part 2 of the thesis: a metaphorical treatment (Chapter 5) of the three previous chapters and our thesis as a whole, and a practical treatment of the same (Chapter 6).

Chapter 5 will turn to literary texts, *Frankenstein* and *Emile*, as a way to further our inquiry.<sup>34</sup> As an exemplum or metaphor for the complementary reciprocation between philosophical hermeneutics and *Women's Ways*, our task will be to gain a "different voice" for taking issue with *techne* or technical know-how and its signal relationship to Gadamer's and *Women's Ways*' preeminent theme, "the abuse of [patriarchal] method" and how it has effected a modern philosophy of education that is based upon "the idea that method -- especially scientific method and *techne* -- is the road to truth."<sup>35</sup>

The aim of the chapter (which is the microtextual theme of the whole)

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<sup>33</sup>"Meeting" is an important theme throughout the thesis. For now, we might simply mention three ways that Gadamer uses the image. We will have more to say about each in the course of our thesis development: 1) "Understanding is always the fusion of these horizons [past and present] supposedly existing by themselves" (Gadamer, 306); 2) "Our inquiry has been guided by the basic idea that language is a medium where I and world meet or, rather, manifest their original belonging together" (Gadamer, 474); and 3) "Hermeneutic work is based on a polarity of familiarity and strangeness. . . It is in the play between the traditionary text's strangeness and familiarity to us, between being historically intended, distanced object and belonging to a tradition. *The true locus of hermeneutics is this in-between*" (Gadamer, 295).

<sup>34</sup>This is similar to the technique used by Maxine Greene, *Landscapes of Learning* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1978); Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); and by Bruce Krajewski, *Traveling with Hermes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992).

<sup>35</sup>Robert Hollinger, "Toward a Hermeneutical Approach to Education," *University of Dayton Review* 17, no. 2 (Winter 1983), 13. Also in this regard, Gadamer hints at our implicit theme of monstrosity: "When a naive faith in scientific method denies the existence of effective history, there can be an actual deformation of knowledge. We are familiar with this from the history of science, where it appears as the irrefutable proof of something that is obviously false" (Gadamer, 301).



could very well be "to preserve us from naive surrender to the experts of social technology."<sup>36</sup> We cannot overstate how important an "education for everyone" must play in that preservation, in spite of the fact that there is nothing new in a call for protection against the "monsters" of technology, even when those monsters begin to reproduce in the world of modern education.<sup>37</sup> So one might think of Chapter 5 as a reaffirmation of Gadamer's thesis in *Truth and Method*: ". . . the thing which hermeneutics teaches us is to see through the dogmatism of asserting an opposition and separation between the ongoing, natural 'tradition' and the reflective appropriation of it."<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup>Hans-Georg Gadamer, "On the Scope and Function of Hermeneutical Reflection," in *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, ed. and trans. David E. Linge (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 40.

<sup>37</sup>In this century alone, for example, we think immediately of Aldous Huxley's 1932 novel *Brave New World*; Jacques Ellul's *La Technique ou l'enjeu du siècle*, which was first published in 1954 and translated into English in 1964 as *The Technological Society*; Heidegger's "The Question Concerning Technology" (1954); C.P. Snow's *The Two Cultures* (1959); Gadamer's *Wahrheit und Methode* (1960); and more recently in more measured terms we think of Albert Borgmann's *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life* (1984), published in the same year that Robert Hollinger proposed his "Toward a Hermeneutical Approach to Education" with its emphasis on the monomethodological takeover of modern education, and Thomas F. Green, in the Dewey Lecture for that same year, addressed "The Formation of Conscience in an Age of Technology"; and Donna Haraway's "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980's" (1985). In 1990 Lynn Cheney's NEH report on educational practices gone wrong, "Tyrannical Machines," appeared; Neil Postman's *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (1992) came out, and most recently, Joseph Dunne's (1993) indictment of the behavioral objectives model of education was published.

<sup>38</sup>Gadamer, 28. And as a further clarification of the intentions behind philosophical hermeneutics, we can turn to Gadamer's "Foreword to the Second Edition of *Truth and Method*": "I did not intend to produce a manual for guiding understanding in the manner of the earlier hermeneutics. I did not wish to elaborate a system of rules to describe, let alone direct, the methodical procedure of the human sciences. Nor was it my aim to investigate the theoretical foundation of work in these fields in order to put my findings to practical ends. If there is any practical consequence of the present investigation, it certainly has nothing to do with an unscientific 'commitment'; instead it is concerned with the scientific integrity of acknowledging the commitment involved in all understanding. My real concern was and is philosophic: not what

In Chapter 6, we will demonstrate how Gadamer's concept of hermeneutical understanding can have application in the classroom and how the "meeting" of philosophical hermeneutics and *Women's Ways* can have a further impact on educational theory and practice.<sup>39</sup> For at least the past twenty years, supporting evidence, both theoretical and practical, has been growing to substantiate the claim in favor of the compatibility of Gadamer's hermeneutics and education. In the *practice* of education, for example, we have seen the rise and development of collaborative learning, cooperative education, global awareness and multiculturalism, whole language, the American Association for the Advancement of Science's endorsement of a "Liberal Arts Approach to Science" (1991) and its offshoot, the "hands-on" approach to science and research, "Project Kaleidoscope" (1992), the new problem-solving configurations for the teaching of mathematics that were recently proposed by the National Council for the Teachers of Mathematics, the practice of "connected teaching," the spread of interest in interdisciplinary studies (note here the increasing memberships in organizations like the Association for Integrative Studies), the growing recognition of qualitative

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we do or what we ought to do, but what happens to us over and above our wanting and doing" (xxviii).

<sup>39</sup>Relative to the universal needs of education, Gadamer identifies the task of philosophical hermeneutics as "the opening up of the hermeneutical dimension in its full scope, showing its fundamental significance for our entire understanding of the world and thus for all the various forms in which this understanding manifests itself: from interhuman communication to manipulation of society; from personal experience by the individual in society to the way in which he encounters society; and from the tradition as it is built of religion, law, art and philosophy, to the revolutionary consciousness that unhinges the tradition through emancipatory reflection" (Gadamer, "On the Scope and Function," 18).

research as a valid procedure, the widespread use of "portfolio assessment," and the current interest in *understanding* as a key component in the learning process.<sup>40</sup> As for *theory*, the two principal works on the specific correlation between hermeneutics and education in general are Shaun Gallagher's *Hermeneutics and Education* (1992) and Timothy Crusius' *A Teacher's Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics* (1991). Gallagher's is a thorough treatment of contemporary hermeneutics in the service of his argument for Gadamer's "moderate hermeneutics" as a basis for rethinking "textualism" as the interpretive paradigm for the educational experience. He argues convincingly that the "educational experience is always hermeneutical experience."<sup>41</sup> Crusius' work was sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English and is the second in a series of books dealing with contemporary scholarship. Its aim, generally, is to summarize for teachers of English and language arts the history and nature of hermeneutics, and to describe, specifically, some classroom-tested ways that philosophical hermeneutics, in tandem with rhetoric, has been applied to the teaching of composition. But the language arts classroom is only one area in education where this connection is being explored.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> See the following: Shulman, Messer, et al., Tannen, Egan, Gardner, Perkins, Brooks and Brooks, and Cohen, et al.

<sup>41</sup> Gallagher, 39.

<sup>42</sup> Among the many articles which have appeared since 1973 are the following: Deetz (1973, 1978), Vandenberg (1973, 1979), Hyde & Smith (1979), Rorty (1982, 1989), Brooks (1982), Stewart (1983), Hollinger (1983, 1984), Kinneavy (1987), Atkins (1988), Berthoff (1990, 1991), Saeta (1991), Oshevsky (1992), Richberg, et al (1994), and Sotirou (1993).

Thus, on the evidence of twenty-five years of education's interest in Gadamer's hermeneutics, and on the strength and cogency of Gallagher's and Crusius' arguments, the case for hermeneutics and education needs to be given serious consideration by the education establishment. This means taking stock in some of Gallagher's basic conclusions: 1) The educational experience is a dialectical "interchange of interpretations rather than an exchange of information;" 2) This interpretational interchange is opposed to "the narrowly defined epistemological notion of cognition;" 3) "The paradigm of learning is one that takes its bearing from the interpretational *process* rather than from the interpretational *object*;" 4) The essence of *Bildung* includes "the dialectical [and play-like] movement of transcendence and appropriation;" and 5) Practical judgment or *phronesis* is "the interpretational virtue [most compatible with the educational experience] that one can fall back on within a hermeneutical situation that is uncertain."<sup>43</sup> Given these conclusions, then, it seems that we cannot avoid the larger conclusion to which this line of thinking ultimately must lead: If the educational experience is, in fact, hermeneutical, and constitutive of that hermeneutical experience is an applied ontological understanding which is foundationally linguistic and a paradigm for learning, then the educational experience, itself, is ontological, and hermeneutical

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These include both theoretical and practical approaches to a variety of educational issues -- from the cognitive psychology of understanding, to rhetoric and speech communication, to the art class, to whole language instruction, to curriculum theory, to mathematics, to social studies.

<sup>43</sup>Gallagher, 39, 39, 331, 50, 342

understanding (Gallagher's *learning*) becomes the paradigm for the educational experience. Minimally, a cautious acceptance of all or part of this conclusion would lead to a reexamination, on the one hand, of contemporary education's identification of *phronesis* with *techné*, and on the other, practice with hegemonic applied theory. At best, we could begin to talk about education as essential to our Being as well as to our *well-Being*.

To conclude this chapter, we need to return to its beginning and the forewarning of how easily one can misunderstand the title of this thesis, for circumscribing that act of misunderstanding lies one of the quintessential concerns of Gadamer, hermeneutics, this study, and education: *prejudice*.

Given the initial misreading of titles within titles, the reader's preliminary expectations for what this work is all about would probably have been effected by memories of the "*Frankenstein Meets*" subgenre of the horror movie, the "background radiation," if you will, of the Karloff-Lugosi Event. And it would take an individual reading of the text itself in order to determine where *those* memories and preconceptions would lead the reader. In the case of this thesis, sooner or later it would become apparent that that projected forethought, i.e., the connection with the monster-movie tradition, would not square with the facts as they begin to unfold. Hence, this situation would give rise to the question, "What truth shows up if my 'prejudices' and yours confront each other on the

occasion of this text?"<sup>44</sup> It is when this "meeting" or confrontation shakes loose dialogue that a hermeneutical experience "happens" (where "hermeneutics" in its broadest sense means the processes of interpretation). The "truth" that "shows up" is what hermeneutics identifies with *understanding*; the "prejudices" are the unavoidable forestructures or pre-opinions immanent in the linguistic tradition that formulates that "truth"; and the question itself is the prerequisite opening without which "truth" as ontological understanding would not be able to "unconceal" itself.

But at this point, our intention is not to spread all of the hermeneutical cards on the table. What we *do* want to accomplish with this Frankensteinian illustration is to *demonstrate* what will be, for most of this dissertation, an attempt to open up inquiry into how hermeneutics, feminism, and education, are interrelated.<sup>45</sup> The remainder of this subsection, then, will present a brief hermeneutical reflection that will, first, locate in those prejudgments associated with the title a part that will stand for the whole of the thesis. That synecdochical relation will allow us, second, to build on those prejudgments, which will, in turn, third, open up the thesis to an intersubjective dialogue that will fourth, effect certain "truths" that will, in the course of dialogic time, become prejudices themselves,

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<sup>44</sup>Roy Howard, *Three Faces of Hermeneutics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 149.

<sup>45</sup>Note that the word "demonstrate" derives from the Latin *monstrare* < *monstrum*: to show, to display (*montrer* in French), the same etymological source for "monster" and "muster."

open to hermeneutic reflection on their own terms. It is when these prejudice-induced "truths" that were conceptually (at conception) metaphors *remain* truths,<sup>46</sup> that understanding is suffocated, the unnatural is naturalized, and "monsters" are created.

So in a roundabout way this *is* an essay about monsters but only insofar as *monster* is circumvented by the concept of *monstrosity*. And it is in this individualized concept of "monstrosity" that we find the whole of our project. It is the part that will allow us to continue in the dialectical process of "whole-part-whole" which is the "hermeneutic circle" of understanding, a circular "inner dynamic, like that in a bead of mercury which, even when its original mass is shattered, continues in its fractions to manifest the same shape."<sup>47</sup> The whole, in other words, *effects* the part and the part *affects* the whole.<sup>48</sup> The "inner dynamic" of what follows, then, is the back-and-forth movement of that whole-part-whole process that defines hermeneutical theory, a process that begins for us with the concept of "monstrosity."

The notion of "monstrosity," as we will be using it, derives from

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<sup>46</sup>See Paul De Man's "Anthropomorphism and Trope in the Lyric" in Harold Bloom's *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), where he analyzes the implications of Nietzsche's assertion that "truth is a mobile army of metaphors." De Man argues that "Truth is a trope; a trope generates a norm or value; this value (or ideology) is no longer true. It is true that tropes are the producers of ideologies that are no longer true" (127).

<sup>47</sup>Howard, 10.

<sup>48</sup>Put in terms of the scope of this project: my preconception or *project* -ion of wholeness, i.e., my expectation of immanent completedness, was an initial construing of "an original mass" (the apparent commonalities of philosophical hermeneutics, *Women's Ways*, and the education experience), which, when conceptually "shattered," continued in its "fractions," (*Frankenstein*, *Emile*, and their reciprocal wholeness, "monstrosity"), "to manifest the same shape" as that of my original foreconception.

*Monstrous Imagination* (1993), Marie-Helene Huet's study of the "maternal imagination" and the powerful influence it was believed to have had on the embryological development of the fetus.<sup>49</sup> From Huet's perspective "The monster was seen as a visible image of the mother's hidden passions . . . the result of a mother's fevered and passionate consideration of images. . . . More specifically, monsters were the offspring of an imagination that literally imprinted on progeny a deformed, misshapen resemblance to an object that had not participated in their creation." A child might be born, for example, bearing no resemblance to either parent but bearing the likeness of, let's say, a statue that the mother, for whatever reason, was enamoured of during the pregnancy. "The monster thus erased paternity and proclaimed the dangerous power of the maternal imagination." In other words, "If Art must imitate Nature, in cases of monstrous procreation Nature imitates Art."<sup>50</sup> We might think of it this way: In its role as subliminal progenitor, the apperception of an image (a work of art) takes over the mother's imagination (*image* - ination). Once the takeover is complete, the subverted imagination develops into a kind of "imaginary" placenta which then directs the "natural" or biological reproductive sequence which results in the "monstrous" birth that is a reproduction of the original work of art,

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<sup>49</sup>Marie-Helene Huet, *Monstrous Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993). Of secondary interest here is that Kant discusses "monstrosity" relative to his theory of the Sublime (in his *Critique of Pure Judgement*, which was first published in Berlin in 1790 and translated into French in 1796 -- approximately half-way between the publication dates of *Emile* and *Frankenstein*, respectively).

<sup>50</sup>Ibid, 6, 5, 1, 7.



thus Nature imitating Art. A point to remember here: the "monster" is monstrous not because of some horrific deformity, but because it has an uncanny *likeness* to something other than the supposed biological parents.

Professor Huet traces this conceit through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and argues that with Romanticism the tables turned: The maternal-monstrous imagination shifted from the *procreative*, embryological sphere, to the aesthetic sphere where it was then inverted and appropriated as a creative, masculine attribute -- an attribute that helped to create Romanticism's portrait of the (male) artist as a lone, solitary, semi-demonic, genius, who -- like Prometheus, Zeus, and Yahweh, (and Caliban's god, Setebos) -- could procreate *ex nihilo*. The obvious prototype here, of course, is Victor Frankenstein, about whom we will have more to say -- especially as "specular companion" to Emile's Jean-Jacques.<sup>51</sup> What is significant to remember now, however, is that with Victor Frankenstein "The teratogenic scientist ["teratogeny" is the science of creating monsters] had usurped the mother's place, his laboratory had become an artificial womb, and the model -- the images [the statue I mentioned earlier] of earlier times hanging in the church or in the conjugal bedroom -- now belonged to a linguistic category: the endless taxonomy of 'families' of monstrosities that living embryos

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<sup>51</sup>The idea behind the phrase is essentially De Man's (See n. 46): "the homology between concept and figure as symmetrical structures and aberrant repressions of differences is dramatized in the specular destinies of the artist and the scientist-philosopher" (125). The mirror image of the two has obvious implications for the Emile/Victor Frankenstein analogy.

would be made to replicate."<sup>52</sup> The "taxonomied" monster had now become a work of art, but art in the Aristotelian sense of *techne* as something that can be made (*poiesis*) via blueprint or recipe.<sup>53</sup>

The importance of *techne* and *phronesis* to the purpose of this thesis will become even more evident in the three chapters which follow; for now, the point to be underscored is that the ascendancy of technical reason (reproduction) over practical reason (interpretation) revolved upon the Enlightenment's "prejudice against prejudice,"<sup>54</sup> its confidence that the universe, in Locke's phrase, was a "stupendous machine," and that Reason as the Natural Law which governs that machine, could be discovered, reproduced, and controlled.<sup>55</sup> Here is

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<sup>52</sup>Huet, 122.

<sup>53</sup>Again, to underscore the importance of the Aristotelian distinction between *techne* and *phronesis* to this thesis, I defer to Joseph Dunne's recent study of *phronesis* and *techne* in modern philosophy, *Back to the Rough Ground* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993). There he defines *techne* as "... the kind of knowledge possessed by an expert maker; it gives him [sic] a clear conception of the why and wherefore, the how and with-what of the making process and enables him, through the capacity to offer a rational account of it, to preside over his activity with secure mastery" (9). But, as Dunne goes on to argue, even though it may be said of Aristotle that with this concept of *techne* he "laid down the authoritative framework for the whole Western tradition of purposive rationality" (9), "... he nonetheless stopped short of according it an unlimited jurisdiction in human affairs. Besides *poiesis* ... he recognized another type of activity, *praxis*, which is conduct in a public space with others in which a person, without ulterior purpose and with a view to no object detachable from himself, acts in such a way as to realize excellences that he has come to appreciate in his community as constitutive of a worthwhile way of life" (10). Because *praxis* required something other than the detachment or "uncompromised sovereignty" of *poiesis* because it "brought one's emotions so much more into play and both formed and revealed one's character -- as well as because of its bringing one into situations that were very much more heterogeneous and contingent than the reliably circumscribed situations of *poiesis*, *praxis* required for its regulation a kind of knowledge that was more personal and experiential, more supple and less formulable, than the knowledge conferred by *techne*. This practical knowledge (knowledge fitted to *praxis*) Aristotle called *phronesis*, and in his analysis of it, in which he distinguished it explicitly from *techne*, he bequeathed to the tradition a way of viewing the regulation of practice as something nontechnical but not, however, nonrational" (10).

<sup>54</sup>Gadamer, 270.

<sup>55</sup>This was not a unique, late eighteenth-century phenomenon. One need only remember that as early as 1620, Sir Francis Bacon was describing his "new organon" as the "machine" for

where Huet's explication of monstrosity comes in. As we have seen, monstrosity is linked to a process of "image resolution," either through the maternal imagination's processing of external objects or through the paternal (scientistic) imagination's recursiveness. Either way requires some sort of preconception which directly shapes the progeny, but the criteria by which one labels this progeny a "monster," as we have seen, depends upon *degrees* of identity and difference, and it is in this interpretive act that the unnatural gets naturalized.<sup>56</sup> As Huet observes, the mistaken etymology of the word "anomaly" is analogous to this process. Originally from the Greek, *an-omalos*, "not-even" but misconstrued as derived from *a-nomos*, "not-law," and hence related to the Latin *norma* or "rule," ". . . the category of the monstrous is reduced . . . to the category of norm/normal." When monsters become the classificatory property of the biological sciences, which means that the mother is excluded from the progenic process, "when we presume to imagine that we can provoke them experimentally, then the monster is naturalized."<sup>57</sup> As we noted above, the same thing can be said for prejudice: When prejudice (*preconception*) is mistaken for ideology, and "Truth" or "The Correct Meaning" is reproduced or replicated rather than

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putting "philosophy and the sciences . . . on the solid foundation of experience of every kind" (6). To paraphrase his famous aphorism: His "machine" would be the way to control Nature by obeying her (29).

<sup>56</sup>For an "unnatural" look at the nature of science, see Lewis Wolpert, *The Unnatural Nature of Science* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), especially Chapter Two, "Technology is not Science." Note its relevance to our Chapter 3 on Dewey and his conception of scientific method.

<sup>57</sup>Huet, 102.

questioned as the metaphor it is, then the unnatural (the ideological), as was the case for the monstrous (an image of an image), gets "normed" or naturalized. The most obvious externalization of this phenomenon is the latest reincarnation of *Frankenstein*, the cyborg film -- more monstrous than its progenitor because the new eugenic version is a perfect human replication. It looks exactly like everyone else.<sup>58</sup>

We can conclude this first chapter with what should prove to be not only a more concrete example of what we have just described, but also a transitional example which will move us into a discussion of hermeneutics as a theory of understanding and a step closer to the whole, a part of which has been this view of monstrosity.

That first impressions are oftentimes, and ironically, *misimpressions* is self-evident. That they continue to be so we attribute to irrationality or a kind of "ironied irony." In his *Science News* article entitled "False Impressions,"<sup>59</sup> Bruce Bower reports on current research into the "social psychology" of such "judgmental mishaps" and tells the following story:

As the clutch of mourners files out of the cemetery, they pass a neatly attired man approaching a grave. He kneels by the headstone, pulls a rubber chicken from his overcoat and props it against the burial marker. A strained chuckle

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<sup>58</sup>In "real life" one need only recall the recent controversy over the cloning of human embryos. The scientific community was quick to point out that, after all, this was a *technique* quite common to the assembly-line procedures of animal husbandry. One is also reminded of the occasional forgery, e.g., the "discovery" of a "new" Rembrandt or of *Hitler's Diaries*.

<sup>59</sup>Bruce Bower, "False Impressions" *Science News* 141 (March 28, 1992), 200-203.

escapes from the pit of his stomach.

Puzzled looks cross the mourners' faces. By the time they reach their cars, each has an explanation for the bizarre scene.

"What a disrespectful young man," says one woman. "How would you like someone to throw a dead chicken on your grave and then laugh about it?"

Her husband nods. "He did look a little funny. Could have been gloating over the death of a business competitor."

Another woman shakes her head. "Who knows, the chicken might have meant something to the dead person. Still that guy was odd, wasn't he?"

Meanwhile, the mysterious poultry bearer pays his last respects to his departed friend, a comedian whose favorite prop was a rubber chicken."<sup>60</sup>

Citing evidence to support the apparently natural human propensity to be "drastically overconfident about [our] judgments of others," the researchers' remind us that studies over the past twenty-five years have emphasized "the tendency of people to assume that another person's behavior reflects primarily his or her underlying personality traits rather than the influence of the situation in which the behavior occurs." But instead of searching for a "dividing line" between "disposition and situation," the focus of recent investigation has been on "*exemplar-mediated prejudice*," [italics mine] where an "exemplar" is defined as a mental representation of some "other" individual, a picture which suggests positive and negative qualities that affect our impressions of real people who somehow match up with that particular exemplar.<sup>61</sup>

But like Browning's Caliban, who "sees" an "exemplar" of his God Setebos recursively -- that is, it endlessly "loops" like a television screen that has lost its horizontal hold -- if we become so

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 200.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

straitjacketed in our own prevision or forestructure so as not to allow for any openness whatsoever, if we have disallowed the readiness for interpretive understanding, if we are closed to the educative process of drawing us out of our prejudices in favor of a deductive process of drawing us into them, then we are within an experiential continuum that not only is miseducative in Dewey's sense, but is also irrational in the political sense of a liberal democracy. To live in such circuitry is to live in a technocracy. The Enlightenment's solution to this sort of "irrationality," as I mentioned earlier, was an insistence, as Gadamer incriminatingly puts it, on "a prejudice against prejudice." For Gadamer, prejudice (in the sense of preconception or prejudgement as we have been using it) is not the problem. The problem, as he sees it, (and as this thesis presents it in relation to education) is the identification of truth with method.

## CHAPTER 2

## UNDERSTANDING

The Understanding, like the Eye, whilst it makes us see,  
and perceive all other Things, takes no notice of itself:  
And it requires Art and Pains to set it at a distance and  
make it its own Object.

– Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*

What the object-other yields to us in nonconscious  
response is understanding. -- Nel Noddings, *Caring*

When John Locke hypostatizes understanding as “the most elevated Faculty of the Soul,”<sup>62</sup> he is not talking about “women’s ways of knowing” nor is he talking about philosophical hermeneutics, for as Dilthey remarked, “No real blood runs in the veins of the subject that Locke, Hume, and Kant constructed.”<sup>63</sup> For Gadamer and for *Women’s Ways of Knowing*<sup>64</sup> such empirically constructed monstrosities, rather than epitomizing what it means to be human, actually represent a dehumanization and negation of human understanding and, in effect, continue to reinforce Bacon’s dictum that “Human knowledge and human power meet in one.”<sup>65</sup>

“Understanding,” for *Women’s Ways*, “involves intimacy and equality between self and other”<sup>66</sup> and is inviolably embedded in an ethics of

<sup>62</sup>Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 6.

<sup>63</sup>H-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 246. Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent references to Gadamer will come from this work.

<sup>64</sup>Mary Belenky, et al., *Women’s Ways of Knowing* (New York: Basic Books, 1986). Hereafter abbreviated as *Women’s Ways*.

<sup>65</sup>Francis Bacon, *The New Organon*, ed. F.H. Anderson (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1960), 39.

<sup>66</sup>Belenky, et al., 101.

care, in "connected knowing," and in "connected teaching." This way of thinking about understanding shares in the ontological understanding as it is described by Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics and in the understanding of which the practitioners of "pedagogies of understanding" are implicitly aware.

Nevertheless, Locke's quasi-psychologistic philosophy of understanding, or a loosely fitting Humean derivative of it, is the version that most educationists have in mind with Benjamin Bloom's<sup>67</sup> behavioral objectives model, when they urge understanding to "make it its own object," as if it were something that we "have," something intrinsic to human beings -- to turn a Rortyan phrase -- that allows us to "understand" things as "they really are." But ironically this essential "cognitive" faculty eludes adequate definition. For example, here is the entry for "understanding" as it appears in the 1952 Penguin edition of *A Dictionary of Psychology*: "The apprehension of the meaning of phenomena, words, or statements; often employed loosely and indefinitely, as some sort of agency; general term, covering functions which involve apprehension of meaning."<sup>68</sup> The point here is not that this was the "technical" definition on which the professional psychologists at the Boston convention were relying, but as a

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<sup>67</sup>Keep in mind that the first working group for Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* was made up of college examiners attending the 1948 American Psychological Association Convention in Boston, and "Handbook I: Cognitive Domain" of the *Taxonomy* was published in 1956.

<sup>68</sup>James Drever, *A Dictionary of Psychology* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1952), 306.



pervasive concept, we can assume that it was representative of the population's usage in general and of the educational community in particular.

We might imagine that for Locke (and for many of today's educational psychologists), understanding is something like a cognitive capacitor for the storage of perceptions that also provides the potential energy for the association of those perceptions as Truth, all of which is effected by the "electricity" of Reason. Understanding as this objectifiable and quantitative Truth-to-Reason ratio is, by and large, what has stayed with us today in the technical rationality of the behavioral objectives approach to education, an approach that "requires Art and Pains" to measure the degree to which understanding -- that elevated "thing" which we have inside of us -- has been achieved *in* our students, and this at the expense of a philosophy of understanding that recognizes the futility of treating education as an applied science.

As a way to begin to talk about the compatibility of Gadamer's understanding as a hermeneutic principle and recent approaches to education that might be best summed up as "pedagogies of understanding," our task in this chapter will be, first, to define understanding in its "elevated status" as "a hermeneutic principle";<sup>69</sup> second, to deploy Joseph Dunne's Gadamerian-based argument against the empirical model of understanding and its offspring, the behavioral objectives model of teaching, as inimical to

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<sup>69</sup>Gadamer, 265.

the educational experience and as representative of what Gadamer attacks as "method"; and third, to suggest that the concept of understanding as it is used by Gadamer is compatible with the concept of understanding as it is developed by the current practitioners of the pedagogies of understanding.<sup>70</sup>

Described by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald Marshall in their "Translator's Preface to *Truth and Method* as "the central question of Gadamer's investigation,"<sup>71</sup> "understanding" is given its fullest treatment in Part Two, Section II, of Gadamer's *Truth and Method*. There we discover -- as Deetz recognized in his seminal articles on Gadamer's hermeneutics and communications studies<sup>72</sup> -- that Gadamer's "understanding" can be broadly characterized by the following: 1) *historicity*, since it is detached from all dogmatic interest in explaining the course of events as the result of ahistorical causes; 2) *linguisticity*, in that language is the fundamental mode of our being-in-the-world and therefore the mode of understanding itself;<sup>73</sup> and 3) its *dialectical structure*, or the essential

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<sup>70</sup>These "pedagogies of understanding" include "connected teaching" as it is described in Chapter 10 of *Women's Ways of Knowing*; however, since our Chapter 4 is explicitly concerned with that aspect of the thesis, discussion of "connected teaching" throughout this chapter will be implicit.

<sup>71</sup>Gadamer, xvi.

<sup>72</sup>See Stanley Deetz's "An Understanding of Science and a Hermeneutic Science of Understanding," *The Journal of Communication* 23 (June 1973), 139-59, and "Conceptualizing Human Understanding: Gadamer's Hermeneutics and American Communication Studies," *Communication Quarterly* 26: 2 (Spring 1978), 12-23. Deetz's work also figures into the discussion of care and *Women's Ways of Knowing* in Chapter Four.

<sup>73</sup> Gadamer's aphorism which is a microtext for the whole of *Truth and Method* is "Being that can be understood is language" (Gadamer, 474).

"openness" of understanding, a predisposition for the "logic of question and answer" which allows for interaction and integration or "fusion of horizons" between interlocutors.

When we refer to Gadamer's "understanding" as being "elevated to the status of a hermeneutic principle," it is really the *historicity*<sup>74</sup> of understanding that is being so elevated. The problem with historicity "is how hermeneutics, once freed from the ontological obstructions of the scientific concept of objectivity, can do justice to the historicity of understanding." To answer this question, Gadamer relies on the concept of the hermeneutical circle to explain that although "hermeneutics has traditionally understood itself as an art or technique," its circular structure, constitutive of Being itself, is "not primarily a prescription for the practice of understanding, but a description of the way interpretive understanding is achieved."<sup>75</sup>

For Gadamer this means that understanding is not simply empathy. It is not "a mysterious communion of souls, but sharing in common meaning." Indeed understanding "will always involve more than merely reconstructing the past 'world' to which the work belongs. Our understanding will always retain the consciousness that we too belong to that world, and correlatively, that the work too belongs to our world." Because understanding constitutes the

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<sup>74</sup> Palmer defines "historicity" as "the intrinsic temporality of understanding itself in seeing the world always in terms of past, present, and future . . ." (Palmer, 180).

<sup>75</sup>Gadamer, 265-266.

movement of Being itself, we can never presume to think that a "correct" meaning or intention is discoverable by some innate faculty that allows us to identify with another person or with another time period. The most we can hope to achieve is "that we remain open to the other meaning of the other person or the text. But this openness always includes our situating the other meaning in relation to the whole of our own meanings or ourselves in relation to it." In fact, "the hermeneutical task becomes itself a questioning of things . . . [and] a person trying to understand a text is prepared for it to tell him [sic] something. That is why a hermeneutically trained consciousness must be, from the start, sensitive to the text's alterity. But this kind of sensitivity involves neither 'neutrality' with respect to content nor to the extinction of one's self, but the foregrounding and appropriation of one's own fore-meanings and prejudices. The important thing is to be aware of one's own bias, so that the text can present itself in all its otherness and thus assert its own truth against one's own fore-meanings." "It is the tyranny of hidden prejudices that makes us deaf to what speaks to us in tradition."

For our purposes, the historicity of understanding might be best summed up with Gadamer's emphasis that, "Understanding is to be thought of less as a subjective act than as participating in an event of tradition, a process of transmission in which past and present are constantly mediated. This is what must be validated by hermeneutic theory, which is far too dominated by the idea of a procedure, a

method." It is this mediation of present and past that Gadamer calls a "fusion of horizons" and by which he further defines understanding: "Understanding is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves."<sup>76</sup>

Contemporaneous with this fusion of horizons is the linguistic dimension of Gadamer's hermeneutical understanding. And Gadamer is unequivocal about this when he asserts that "Being that can be understood is language" or that "understanding and interpretation are ultimately the same thing."<sup>77</sup> And this linguisticity, in turn, bears directly on the historicity of understanding: "The essential relation between language and understanding is seen primarily in the fact that the essence of tradition is to exist in the medium of language, so that the preferred object of interpretation is a verbal one." This means that "the linguisticity of understanding is the concretion of historically effected consciousness," a claim that allows for understanding and interpretation to "transcend" their specific relationship to the verbal tradition "because everything that is intelligible must be accessible to understanding and to interpretation. What is true of understanding is just as true of language. Neither is to be grasped simply as a fact that can be empirically investigated.

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<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 268-270, 290, 306.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 474, 388. As a way to imagine what Gadamer is getting at here, we can call up Joseph Dunne's use of the Irish poet Seamus Heaney's analogy of a snowman: "A human being pondering the nature of language is not unlike a snowman attempting to comprehend the nature of snow, for the snowman's instruments of cognition are no less snowy than the human being's are wordy" (Dunne, 413). Dunne goes on to reinforce this image by quoting from Gadamer's essay "Man and Language": "... all thinking about language is already once again drawn back into language. We can only think in a language and just this residing of our thinking in a language is the profound enigma that language presents to thought" (413).

Neither is ever simply an object but instead comprehends everything that can ever be an object."<sup>78</sup> In sum, "the phenomenon of understanding shows a universality of human linguisticity as a limitless medium that carries everything within it."<sup>79</sup> Or to borrow a metaphor from Heidegger: "Tradition, then, is not over against us but something in which we stand and through which we exist; for the most part it is so transparent a medium that it is invisible to us--as invisible as water to a fish."<sup>80</sup>

When we speak about the dialectical, the third way of distinguishing Gadamer's hermeneutical understanding, we need to make the distinction between "dialogic" and "dialectic." Although for Gadamer, understanding, almost by definition, interinvolves both of these, the dialogical can be thought of as simply an exchange of information, as in having an introductory conversation with a new acquaintance; whereas, "dialogue proper, which is concerned with the common search for meaning . . . is the original form of dialectics." This is the integrative principle to which we have already been introduced as the "fusion of horizons," which is not a closing (in that sense of "fusing") of the dialogue but rather an opening up of heretofore unknown possibilities. It takes the dialogue beyond what is already present while changing the "horizons" of the interlocutors in such a way as to "disconceal" what was "dormant" or otherwise

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<sup>78</sup>Gadamer, 389, 404.

<sup>79</sup>Gadamer, "On the Scope and Function," 25.

<sup>80</sup>Palmer, 177.

hidden in the interactivity of the linguisticity of Being on the one hand, and, on the other, the "historically effected consciousness" that brings this new Being, so to speak, into being. And Gadamer makes the point over and over again that this is indeed an emancipatory experience. For example, he claims that, "The hermeneutical experience is the corrective by means of which the thinking reason escapes the prison of language, and it is itself verbally constituted." And elsewhere he says, "All human speaking is finite in such a way that there is laid up within it an infinity of meaning to be explicated and laid out." But perhaps more specifically, he tells us that, "To reach an understanding in a dialogue is not merely a matter of putting oneself forward and successfully asserting one's own point of view, but being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were."<sup>81</sup>

Nonetheless, granted the emancipatory movement of the dialectic, it is the "question" that is the undercarriage of this dialectical freedom or openness: ". . . thus the relation of question and answer is, in fact, reversed. The voice that speaks to us from the past -- whether text, work, trace -- itself poses a question and places our meaning in openness. In order to answer the question put to us, we the interrogated must ourselves begin to ask questions. We must attempt to reconstruct the question to which the traditional text is an answer. But we will be unable to do so without going beyond the

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<sup>81</sup>Gadamer, 188, 402, 458, 379.

historical horizon it presents us." In short, a good way to get a feel for this dialectical quality of Gadamer's understanding is to consider it in terms of the following aphoristic formulation: "To understand a question means to ask it. To understand meaning is to understand it as an answer to a question."<sup>82</sup>

To summarize, then, understanding for Gadamer is ontological in that we cannot historically objectify it because it is the temporal movement of our Being itself. To adapt Ezra Pound's definition of poetry, we might think of it as "news that stays news." It is ontologically bound up and made manifest by language which *is* how Being can be understood in the first place. *And* it is ontological in that it is dialectical, sharing in that non-methodical give-and-take, back-and-forth freedom of movement that characterizes "play" as well as the aesthetic experience. In its openness, in its questionableness, it is, like a Heraclitean "source," forever renewing itself while forever offering up the refreshing potential for the nourishment of life, which, if we want to come full circle, is what Being and ontology are all about.

Before moving on to the problem of how hermeneutical understanding can provide us with a possible antidote for the "abuse of method" in education, e.g. the behavioral objectives model, let's take a look at what Gadamer's hermeneutical understanding might be like in practice.<sup>83</sup> However, we need to remember that this is not a

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<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 374-375.

<sup>83</sup>In Chapter 6, we will describe some classroom applications for Gadamer's philosophical



"technique" for how one goes about interpreting a literary text. It is an exemplum, a metaphor for philosophical hermeneutics and thus a metaphor for Being itself.

In one of his *fusees* or "rockets," (which is how he referred to the entries in his personal journals), the nineteenth-century French poet, Charles Baudelaire, says that "God is the only being who, in order to reign, would not even need to exist." (*Dieu est le seul etre qui, pour regner, n'ait meme pas besoin d'exister.*)<sup>84</sup> As a way of sorting out the role of understanding in Gadamer's thought, we can appropriate what Baudelaire seems to be saying here about God as also true of what Gadamer seems to be saying about the historicity of understanding. However, we have to move cautiously, for as we have just seen, any claim to know what Baudelaire "really" meant is undermined from the outset by the historicity of understanding. At best -- and at least for the sake of metaphor -- let's conceive of Baudelaire's meaning as having something to do with the fact that even if God didn't exist (and the insinuation is that God does not exist), people would find a way to create "Him." Now let's give that meaning a little temporal and spatial distance. A contemporary nineteenth-century *bourgeois* reader's first interpretive response might be to write off this seemingly absurd paradox as one of Baudelaire's typically smug wisecracks designed for instant shock value, an arrogant smugness similar to the exhibitionist "punks" of

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hermeneutics complemented by *Women's Ways of Knowing* (and vice versa.)

<sup>84</sup>David Paul, trans. *Poison and Vision*, 98.

a later generation doing their purple-mohawk, iconoclastic thing to make a point about pointlessness and, in an unconscious and ironic way, according to Charles Taylor, about authenticity.<sup>85</sup> What this hypothetical Parisian reader would be projecting onto the text would be his or her own historically situated "prejudices": These may be about the "degenerate" poet Baudelaire, his offensiveness to the Catholic tradition, his insensitivity to what were passing for accepted manners of human decency, and his brazen disregard for decorum or "good taste" in poetry. There would be no attempt on that reader's part to cultivate what philosophical hermeneutics values: to recognize that all understanding involves some prejudice, and that there *is* such a thing as a "legitimate" or enabling prejudice that allows us to get at where the text (Baudelaire) and the reader are "coming from"; to engage in dialogic openness with the Other; to question the text and to have it question you; to achieve an awareness or anticipatory consciousness that this text might, in fact, have something to "unconceal," something to say to an individual reader, maybe even *be* the reader. But from this particular bourgeois reader's contextual point of view, he or she would be responding reasonably, i.e. *objectively*, to an inconsequential, highly subjective, and simply gratuitous remark made by a notorious *poete maudit*, a remark the meaning of which, in the reader's mind, is patently obvious. In turn,

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<sup>85</sup>See Charles Taylor's *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1992) and its "companion" volume, *Multiculturalism and 'The Politics of Recognition.'* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.)

this exemplar-mediated prejudice would remain subordinated to "the tyranny of the hidden prejudice" and would, in its own idiosyncratic "gossipy" way, methodically affect future history by effecting a historical consciousness that would run together the past, present, and future.

But now let's add even more temporal and spatial distance: Let's imagine a twentieth-century small-town Iowan (a "he" in this case), who has been raised in the tradition of family, community, and Judeo-Christian values. If he were to approach this sentence "normatively" (or maybe a more accurate way to say this would be non-hermeneutically), without knowing Baudelaire's lurid reputation, he might interpret the sentence as a clever albeit profound affirmation of *faith*. The thinking involved would probably go something like this: "This statement is very religious indeed. What it says to me is that there is no need (in fact there is no way) to prove that God exists as an historical, physical Being, because the only way that anyone can ever know that God exists is through faith. In other words, that God does not exist is all the more proof one needs to know that He, in fact, omnipotently *and* omnisciently rules heaven and earth."

Now imagine that a friend (a "she" in this case), who is a neo-Marxist *sociologue*, sees this person reading the line from Baudelaire, recognizes it as one of Baudelaire's *fusees*, and with confident ebullience explicates it something like this: "Presumably Baudelaire's suggestion here that God exists by not existing (or vice

versa) is that God, in fact, does not exist except as an ideological construct, a false consciousness that comes into existence for a variety of dominative reasons, the least of which originates in what Nietzsche called the Will to Power -- and that this absence somehow reifies what Derrida calls a 'metaphysics of presence.'"

If, like the nineteenth-century bourgeois reader, the small-town lowan is complacently inexperienced because his horizons are so limited, so lacking in the essential "readiness" or "openness" necessary for someone to have a "new" experience -- to, in fact, *understand* -- he will remain in a "dogmatic slumber," self-condemned to "sleepwalk through history."<sup>86</sup> But if he approaches this new disclosure about the meaning of Baudelaire's sentence dialectically, the experience would be one of negation, and the response might go something like this: "Ironically, much to my embarrassment, the *opposite* of what I took to be the meaning of the statement turns out to have a reasonable validity all of its own." And it is here, according to Gadamer, that through something like a spiraling effect with *Erfahrung* (the hermeneutical experience which will be the subject of the next chapter), understanding finds an opening and "happens" (*geschehen*). This is what he describes as the "fusion of horizons" (*Horizontverschmelzung*). But by this he does not mean an assimilation of the two horizons so that Hegelian-like, a new and "better" interpretation unfolds itself. What Gadamer is insisting

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<sup>86</sup> The "hidden tyranny" of gender issues would certainly come into play here as well, and this is a topic we will deal with directly in Chapter Four.

upon here is an essential dialogue between the text and the interlocutor, a *questioning* of the text in order to arrive at an understanding of the question to which the text is an answer.

Now, back to my situation as the writer of these words and the contriver of this metaphor. Given my current horizon contoured by Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics -- I find myself fusing my "experienced" horizon with Baudelaire's historical horizon by maintaining an openness to what it is that both of us are understanding. This is to say that I am seeking the question to which this *fusee* might be an answer. But having said this, I must be careful, for I could still mistake the originating question for one that satisfies my own immediate needs. For example, I might decide that the question is, "How can this line from a nineteenth-century poet be interpreted as a means of illustrating Gadamerian understanding?" Obviously this is a valid question, but it is not a question that has been effected by historical consciousness. It is an instrumental or methodological question that begs the issue of verification, and accordingly we find ourselves back under "the tyranny of the hidden prejudice." But if I truly engaged in a dialogue with the text, as Gadamer insists that we must, the opening would rightly disconceal itself, and the question that I share with Baudelaire might be something like, "What relationship exists between Being and Nothingness that paradoxically makes Truth possible?" As

hermeneutical understanding emerges, as horizons fuse, a tacit truth about *something* that Baudelaire is saying presents itself as an answer to that question -- an answer as appropriate to Baudelaire's horizon as it is to mine. It is this "reflexive" dimension of understanding that Gadamer identifies as his philosophic "real concern": ". . . [with] not what we do or ought to do, but what happens to us over and beyond our wanting and doing."<sup>87</sup> What emerges is not a *better* horizon, but a *different* horizon, not a separate and distinct horizon of understanding, but a *different* historically-acted-upon and effected perspective that, in *its* unhidden turn, conceals and reveals that "inner tension or ambiguity" that Gadamer speaks of as "truth."

So from our encounter with Baudelaire's *fusee*, a different way to think about Gadamer's "new ontology of the event of understanding" -- of understanding as "*the* ontological process" -- emerges.<sup>88</sup> In one way, Baudelaire's existing-by-not-existing God becomes analogous to thinking about Gadamer's understanding as "the establishment of a metaphorical relation, it fuses two horizons in such a way that they are both the same and different. Without mere contradiction, the hermeneutic *as* joins at one time both *is* and *is not*, and 'in this *as*,' Gadamer writes, 'lies the whole riddle.'<sup>89</sup> In other words, in order to rule, it would not even have to exist. Here, by

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<sup>87</sup>Gadamer, xxviii.

<sup>88</sup>Palmer, 163.

<sup>89</sup> Joel Weinsheimer, "Gadamer's Metaphorical Hermeneutics," in *Gadamer and Hermeneutics*, ed. Hugh Silverman (New York: Routledge, 1991), 201. We will refer to Gadamer's assertion of the "fundamental metaphoricity of language" in Chapters 4 and 5 where we discuss the possibilities of a metaphoric approach to our thesis.

way of transition, Gadamer's point about "infinity" seems to have special relevance:

But the discovery of the true meaning of a text or a work of art is never finished; it is in fact an infinite process. Not only are fresh sources of error constantly excluded, so that all kinds of things are filtered out that obscure the true meaning; but new sources of understanding are continually emerging that reveal unsuspected elements of meaning. The temporal distance that performs the filtering process is not fixed, but is itself undergoing constant movement and extension. And along with the negative side of the filtering process brought about by temporal distance there is also the positive side, namely the value it has for understanding. It not only lets local and limited prejudices die away, but allows those that bring about genuine understanding to emerge clearly as such.<sup>90</sup>

As was indicated in Chapter 1, this thesis is concerned with the problem of counteracting "the naive surrender to the experts of social technology" as it applies to the educational community. On this account, we can take Hollinger's (1984) and Dunne's (1993) observations as being our own. We recall that Hollinger, working from Gadamer's treatment of Aristotle's theory of the general conduct of life, concludes that modern society's educational ideals and practices have been reduced to the needs of a "cost-benefit, utilitarian model of rational choice."<sup>91</sup> This is evident in how our *ethos*, our public activity of being-human-in-the-world (*praxis*) with its corresponding principle of practical reason, the judgment necessary for the rational deliberation of means to ends (*phronesis*), has been reduced to the activity of producing outcomes (*poiesis*) which is

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<sup>90</sup>Gadamer, 298.

<sup>91</sup>Robert Hollinger, "Toward a Hermeneutical Approach to Education," *University of Dayton Review* 17 (Summer 1984), 13.

guided by *its* corresponding principle of technical reason or expert knowledge of ends in themselves (*techne*). In other words, judgment has been reduced to method, a reductionism underscored by the irony in the title of Gadamer's *Truth and Method*. He is not offering a method for arriving at truth; he is putting truth and method in relief as counterintuitive. Moreover, for Gadamer this misguided collapsing of truth or judgment into method has resulted in the indistinguishability of moral from technical knowledge, and he insists that they cannot be thought of as identical: ". . . moral knowledge," he says, "has no merely particular end but pertains to right living in general, whereas all technical knowledge is particular and serves particular ends . . . Moral knowledge can never be knowable in advance like knowledge that can be taught."<sup>92</sup>

Like Hollinger's argument against education as applied science, Dunne's argument against the behavioral objectives model of education also is supported by the work of Gadamer and his philosophical hermeneutics of understanding.<sup>93</sup> Given this antiseptic "objectives" approach to education and given we have already said about Gadamer's hermeneutical understanding -- about its historicity, linguisticity, and dialectical capacity -- it would seem that if someone wanted to produce the exact opposite of a hermeneutical approach to education, the behavioral objectives model would fit the bill, and this is due primarily to the objectives model's commitment

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<sup>92</sup>Gadamer, 320-321.

<sup>93</sup> Dunne refers to Gadamer as "the hermeneutical philosopher *par excellence*, who has done more than anyone to legitimate the place of conversation in philosophy . . ." (Dunne, 23).



to the priority of "rationality" in teaching which, for Dunne, precipitates the larger issue of the nature of any rational practice. Alluding to the title of his book, *Back to the Rough Ground* -- and to the inspiration for it from a passage out of Wittgenstein, Dunne states clearly his position on the objectives model: "one might teach by this model on ice but hardly in the rough ground of the classroom."<sup>94</sup>

In terms of Gadamer's ontological understanding, then, we can call into question the objectives model's vacuum-like mode of being-in-the-world, which is its minimalizing of historicity, linguisticity, and "dialecticality," if you will. As Dunne argues, the difficulty is not so much with the the emphasis on behavior as it is with the concept of "objective" itself: "Written into the concept of *objective* was the requirement that the [objective's] achievement should be verifiable -- that unequivocal evidence should be available to establish it; and confining objectives to observable behavior ensured that this requirement could be met." Presumably, the act of verification -- contrary to any sense of historicity -- would be the responsibility of some detached observer who would have no connectedness, no familiarity with the teacher or with any sense of a local hermeneutics.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore the required precision of the language in which the objective must be stated would preclude any

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<sup>94</sup>Dunne, 3, 5.

<sup>95</sup>As we will see in Chapter 4, this is what *Women's Ways* calls "procedural knowledge" and its attendant epistemology, "separate knowing."

misunderstanding whatsoever. Interpretation, in other words, would be gratuitous because transmission of meaning would approximate something like a scientific telepathy. The teacher would be in communication with "an indeterminate community of observers or of other teachers who, solely by reference to her stated objectives -- and without need to establish through discussion [read dialogue] any shared contextual understanding -- ought to be able, in the one case, to assess her teaching performance and, in the other, to replicate everything essential in it (since what is essential was taken to reside simply in a specified outcome)."<sup>96</sup>

This is the technicist methodology of verification and replication, and its underlying assumption is that there exists "out there," external to language, something that can be discovered and then reproduced in such a way that it can be verified by a third party. Teaching in this model has been reduced to a kind of neutral "transplant operation" whereby teaching as a form of action "is no longer seen as embedded in particular contexts or within cultural, linguistic, religious, or political traditions which may be at work in all kinds of tacit and nuanced ways in teachers and pupils as persons." In effect, teaching is nothing more than the instrumentality which occurs between the preparation of the objectives on the one hand, and their subsequent evaluation on the other. It is the "neutral" means for efficiently effecting ends, while in the course of that operation,

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<sup>96</sup>Dunne, 3. As we enter the "age of virtual reality," I am reminded here of the "virtual reality" of "virtual education"

intimacy, dialogue, tradition, and individual experience -- those human interests which define our being as understanding -- have been denied entry because of their unpredictability, their uncontrollability. But this is not to say that they have been denied entry altogether: ". . . rather than entering into the pedagogic relationship and determining what can transpire within it . . . emotions are allowed to exist only as the content of certain affective objectives which the teacher, with full explicitness and foresight, can plan and control."<sup>97</sup>

Just as the means are considered value-neutral, so then must be the ends and the whole model itself: ". . . the model was seen as carrying no substantive commitments with respect to educational values but as being equally hospitable to educators of any and every persuasion [and] as a framework for organizing teaching, could be presented as neutral; for it made no prescriptions about what should be taught but, rather, offered an instrument to all who had such prescriptions." But, in fact, the only grounding for this presumption of neutrality is the prejudgment that a plan of rational action based on the empirical sciences would be perfectly applicable to and much needed in the fuzzy and "unscientific" practice of education. And it is this very presupposition, i.e., that the empirical sciences can provide a universal norm for all thinking and acting, which is the target of Gadamer's argument for an ontological understanding and his Aristotelian notion of *phronesis* as "the best available model for

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<sup>97</sup>Dunne, 5.

illuminating the kind of understanding that is [Gadamer's] own special concern."<sup>98</sup> Confronted with the noticeable absence of *phronesis* or practical judgment in the objectives model, we begin to realize that in this neutralized environment, whatever it is that makes ends valuable in the first place is unaccounted for. Dunne's point in this regard is that, "Atomistic objectives may seem worthwhile, however, only if they aggregate over time into qualities of mind and character, such as an ability for independent thought and reflection, a habit of truthfulness, a sense of justice, a care for clarity and expressiveness in writing and speech"; yet the "model cannot offer grounds for supposing that qualities such as these -- which I [Dunne] took to be the really significant achievements of education -- even exist."<sup>99</sup> To conclude this section we might do well to recall Gadamer's thoughts on moral knowledge: "It is obvious that man [sic] is not at his own disposal in the same way that the craftsman's material is at his disposal. Clearly he cannot make himself in the same way that he can make something else. Thus it will have to be another kind of knowledge that he has of himself in his moral being, a knowledge that is distinct from the knowledge that guides the making of something." And finally, he tells us that, "We learn a *techne* and can also forget it.

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<sup>98</sup>Dunne, 7, 15. In terms of modern educational theory, *techne* has superceded practical judgment or *phronesis*. This means that there is no room for the extrascientific experiences of *Bildung*, taste, common sense, judgment, tact, or "connected knowing" -- not only because they cannot be measured or otherwise quantified, but because they cannot be taught. The failure of current educational thinking is the conviction that *phronesis* can be reduced to *techne*, when, in fact, they are as different as "truth" and "method."

<sup>99</sup>Dunne, 6-7.

But we do not learn moral knowledge, nor can we forget it."<sup>100</sup>

Counter to the "applied sciences" or "engineering approach" to education are certain teaching practices that are similar enough to each other that they can be called "hermeneutical," but hermeneutical in the sense of the larger thesis of this dissertation -- that the educational experience itself is hermeneutical, where hermeneutics is defined by Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. These approaches to teaching can be grouped into three areas: 1) "connected teaching" as it is described in Chapter 10 of *Women's Ways of Knowing*, 2) teaching practices that are identified explicitly as "hermeneutical," and 3) teaching practices that can be described as tacitly hermeneutical, which includes "pedagogies of understanding" and those strategies that are currently being referred to as "constructivist."<sup>101</sup>

"Connected Teaching" is the approach advocated by the authors of *Women's Ways of Knowing*. For them connected teaching is the antithesis of what Paulo Freire derisively calls the "banking concept of education," a view of pedagogy that caricatures the teacher as a banker whose sole purpose in teaching is to make "deposits," to fill up the students with information.<sup>102</sup> By contrast, according to

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<sup>100</sup>Gadamer, 316-317.

<sup>101</sup>These alternatives to the behavioral objectives mentality will be highlighted in more detail in Chapter 6 where I will outline actual classroom applications. What follows here will be more like a "line up" of these approaches with brief explanations as to what affinities they share with Gadamer's ontological understanding.

<sup>102</sup>See Freire's *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos. (New York: Continuum, 1992). Freire's work parallels many of the ideas presented in this thesis and has influenced many of the "pedagogies of understanding" that will be mentioned in this chapter.

*Women's Ways*, the connected teacher is more like a "midwife" and the educational experience is analogous to that of birth. The role of the midwife-teacher is to "assist in the emergence of consciousness" and her "first concern is to preserve the student's fragile newborn thoughts." With the emphasis on process rather than product, and again citing Freire's problem-posing method, the authors portray "the object of knowledge" as an engagement between teacher and student wherein "they talk out what they are thinking in public dialogue. As they think and talk together their roles merge." This process, in turn, creates the "connected class," a community of learners in which "members can nurture each other's thoughts to maturity" and where "no one apologizes for uncertainty" because, unlike a hierarchy, "it is assumed that evolving thought will be tentative."<sup>103</sup>

Another distinct characteristic of the connected class is its adherence to the authors' conception of "connected epistemology." By this they mean that "the connected class recognizes the core truth in the subjectivist view that each of us has a unique perspective that is in some sense irrefutably 'right' by virtue of its existence. But the connected class transforms these private truths into 'objects,' publicly available to the members of the class who, through 'stretching and sharing,' add to themselves as knowers by absorbing in their own fashion their classmates' ideas. The connected class constructs truth not through conflict but through 'consensus.'" And

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<sup>103</sup>Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, Tarule, 218-219, 221.

further reinforcing this view of consensus is the connected teacher's welcoming of a diversity of opinion in the classroom, "seeing the other, the student, in the student's own terms." On this point the authors rely on the work of Nel Noddings, who contrasts separate education with a pedagogy of caring: "In traditional separate education," according to Noddings, "the student tries to look at the material through the teacher's eyes. In contrast, the caring teacher 'receives and accepts the student's feeling toward the subject matter; she looks at it and listens to it through his eyes and ears.'"<sup>104</sup>

With these main points in mind, then, we can summarize the connected teacher's pedagogy as one that favors "connection over separation, understanding and acceptance over assessment, and collaboration over debate." We might also add that a decisive interest in personal history and experience, a reliance on the linguisticity of experience -- especially through the medium of conversation -- and the recognition of question posing as being "at the heart of connected knowing" are qualities of connected knowing that suggest a strong affinity with Gadamer's "understanding."<sup>105</sup>

The second group of hermeneutical approaches to education are those that have been duly introduced by their practitioners as explicitly hermeneutical (Gadamerian) in their own right. In Chapter 1, we briefly alluded to the fact that philosophical hermeneutics has found its way into many areas of knowledge, so as a way of shoring up

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 222-224.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 229, 189.

the case for a similar pervasiveness in the pedagogical content areas, we need to highlight those larger content areas that have made a case for philosophical hermeneutics in their future:

- 1) Maria-Barbara Watson-Franke and Lawrence C. Watson (1975) suggest that since the task of anthropology is to reach an understanding of cultures through interpretation, some of Gadamer's principles, "such as understanding in context as opposed to preunderstanding and the dialectical relationship between the interpreter and the object of interpretation, may be helpful in defining the essential problems [of anthropological interpretation]."
- 2) Stanley Deetz (1978), arguing for a rethinking of communications studies, singles out Gadamer's position against the idea that a perfect understanding can be found, and calls for a new mode of historical consciousness (Gadamer's) to accommodate "a concept of human understanding which is rich enough to account for everyday experiences as well as provide direction for studying how understanding can be increased in communication." And in a later article (1990) he expands this argument to include "Gadamer's ontology of understanding as a developmental foundation for interpersonal system ethics." Noteworthy here also is Michael Hyde's work (1980) on a hermeneutical application to oral history and John Stewart's (1983) "interpretive listening" as a hermeneutical alternative to empathy.
- 3) Susan J. Hekman (1986) gives over a third of her book on the



sociology of knowledge to establish her argument "that Gadamer's hermeneutics is relevant to the current problems of the social sciences and that it is instrumental to the definition of an anti-foundational social science." Elsewhere (1993) she gives us a glimpse at how Gadamer's hermeneutics could have some "relevance for the formulation of a postmodern feminism."

4) Matthew Robert Foster, in a dissertation for the University of Chicago Divinity School (1987), makes "connections between [Gadamer's] hermeneutics and moral practice in the political context."

5) Roberto Alejandro (1993) makes a strong appeal for Gadamer's hermeneutics in political theory as a new way to think about "citizens as interpreters of traditions, laws and social practices."

6) And one final example that will provide us with the bridge into educational disciplines is the groundbreaking work by Shaun Gallagher (1993) that fully develops the thesis that the educational experience is, indeed, hermeneutical and there are "essential connections between interpretation and education within the contemporary framework of hermeneutics."<sup>106</sup>

Because in Chapter 6 we will be taking a much closer look at actual classroom applications of Gadamer's hermeneutics, these last two sections -- pedagogical content areas that explicitly have used Gadamer's philosophy, and areas in education that have been tacitly hermeneutical -- will set that stage by briefly identifying the

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<sup>106</sup>See the following: Watson-Franke, 247; Deetz (1978), 15 and (1990), 226; Hekman (1986), 91 and (1993), 17; Foster, 2; Alejandro, 69; Gallagher, 2.

subject areas and the idea behind the practice. Explicitly, composition theory and rhetoric (Kinneavy, Berlin, Crusius, Sotirou) have been working with Gadamer's ideas more extensively than most other fields. The reasons for this can be found in the close ties with the historic, linguistic, and dialectical dimensions of understanding. Similarly, foreign language instruction (Peck) with its obvious need for theories of translation, culturality, and dialogue are relying on Gadamer's advocacy of openness, the turning to advantage of individual prejudices, and the game-like interplay of the dialectic. In addition, there is work on a hermeneutical approach for the teaching of academic listening skills in the second language classroom (Stewart). A third approach, in the mathematics classroom (Brown), has taken up the challenge of providing students with an opportunity to avoid positivistic descriptions of content and process by encouraging students to discuss the part-to-whole relationship of "correct answer" and theorem. Art education (Brooks) is another area where Gadamer's ideas have found application. The key idea here begins with the historicity of understanding. Working from this perspective, the art teacher can gain a more experienced understanding of how to relate to individual student needs by fusing the historical horizons of her own work as a child with that of her work as an adult. A fifth example is found in the American literature classroom (Saeta). Here, the dialectical movement of hermeneutical

interpretation can provide a way to cross-examine the process of how the American myth has been created and sustained through the process of canonization. A final model takes us outside of the classroom and into the world of curriculum theory (Atkins). Relying on Gadamer's position that values are applied to concrete and specific situations and that judgment plays a key role in that application, Atkins reasons that if educational experiences are placed within an interpretive framework, then hermeneutics can offer a way to reframe curriculum theory across the board.

In addition to the explicit uses of Gadamer's ideas in the classroom situation, there are extant what can be referred to as tacitly hermeneutical practices. These include what David Perkins, in his book *Smart Schools*, refers to as the "pedagogy of understanding" which urges students, across the disciplines, "to go beyond the given." He details seven "understanding performances" that can facilitate this form of higher order thinking, a line of thought that can be associated with the work of his colleague at Harvard's Project Zero, Howard Gardner. Another example of this movement under the banner of "understanding," if you will, is evidenced by the essays in the recent Jossey-Bass collection, *Teaching for Understanding*. The thread that runs through these essays, like that in Perkins and *Women's Ways*, is concerned with breaking away from the orthodox models of "received knowledge" and "procedural knowledge"<sup>107</sup> in favor of dialogic engagement and questioning. Another recent

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<sup>107</sup>The terms are from *Women's Ways*.

collection of essays, *Education for Judgment*, promotes "discussion teaching" as a way to actively participate in the construction of knowledge which, as the authors tell us, is accomplished through a process of inquiry, critical discourse, and problem-solving. This predisposition toward understanding as a pedagogical principle can also be found in William Reinsmith's portrait of the teacher as dialogist who, among other things, creates mutuality and cooperativeness as well as strives to get students to see dialogue as sharing communal knowledge. And in another work, Kieran Egan's *Primary Understanding*, we get the first installment of a proposed four-volume theory of education that is grounded in a conceptualization of understanding that is based on the "fusing" of Plato's and Rousseau's "horizons" and in this particular volume, aimed at the educational process during the primary school years. One final example, what is being referred to as "constructivism," encompasses many educational practices, e.g., discovery learning, interdisciplinary studies, cooperative and collaborative learning, whole language, the National Science Foundation's "Project Kaleidoscope," and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics revision of problem-solving so as to more clearly reflect the dialogic process. In their *In Search of Understanding: The Case for Constructivist Classrooms*, Brooks and Brooks point to the goal of the constructivist classroom as "a learning environment where students search for meaning, appreciate uncertainty, and inquire

responsibly." And this, they argue, will remove the current impediments to student understanding.<sup>108</sup> By laying out these approaches to education, we hope to bring into view the possibility that there is something inherent about the shared interest in all of them, and that the underlying consensus can be understood as the emerging realization that the educational experience is indeed hermeneutical.

To conclude this chapter, we can turn to a second exemplum, a brief discussion of Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner." As Baudelaire's *fusee* gave us an opening to talk about the nature of Gadamerian understanding, the "Rime" will enable us to see more clearly the nature of hermeneutical understanding in the educational experience.

About fifteen years ago I heard the late Archibald MacLeish lecture on what it is, exactly, about Coleridge's Ancient Mariner that overpoweringly keeps the young Wedding guest from attending the marriage celebration of no less than his own next of kin. Macleish wondered about the didactic eccentricity of the teller and the seeming incongruity between the Mariner and the explicit improbability of what seems to be the innocuous, moral tale that he tells -- a tale, Macleish observed, that not only effectively creates the intimate sense of power necessary to hold the Wedding Guest's

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<sup>108</sup>See Christensen's *Education for Judgment*, xii; Reinsmith's *Archetypal Forms in Teaching*, 96; and Brooks and Brooks' *In Search of Understanding*, v.

will, but to hold it to such a degree that the Guest could not, as Coleridge says, "choose but hear." I don't remember that MacLeish gave any specific answers, but over and over during the years following that lecture, I have been held by what Alfred North Whitehead would probably call the "beauty of the idea," more specifically, the beauty of the idea of MacLeish's question. This, as I understand it, is also what Gadamer enjoins us to do in the process of understanding: Ask, "To what question is this an answer?"

For our current purposes, however, a more helpful way to say this might be by way of Gadamer's "horizon of the question," the attainment of which allows for meaningful understanding. Overcoming the self-alienation of "writtenness" is what understanding does, and the way by which this understanding wins out is through dialogue. Gadamer makes the point that between a reader and a text a dialogue does, in fact, take place. The dialogue is what allows the subject matter to "unconceal" itself to the reader. But just as in dialogue between two people, understanding cannot occur if one of the participants has come to the conversation with his or her mind made up about the subject matter to be discussed. Gadamer's dialogue requires an openness, and this accessibility holds true for the subject matter of a text. Dialogue, for Gadamer, has a mind of its own: "Thus a person who wants to understand must question what lies behind what is said. He must understand it as an answer to a question. If we go back *behind* what is said, then we inevitably ask questions *beyond*

what is said. We understand the sense of the text only by acquiring the horizon of the question -- a horizon that, as such, necessarily includes other possible answers."<sup>109</sup>

But what does all of this have to do with "The Rime," the educational experience, and philosophical hermeneutics? What Coleridge is up to, it seems to me, is a canny statement about what Robert Scholes has called "textual power."<sup>110</sup> Every time we read the "Rime" or, for that matter, any text (especially those that we can't put down) each of us *becomes* that Wedding Guest, and the textual power of the tradition (the Mariner), to paraphrase Coleridge, can "have our will." In Gadamer's jargon this is "what happens to us over and above our wanting and doing" because, as Gadamer would have it, that which is being communicated in the text has a will of its own, the "will" of "historically effected consciousness." So although we must be aware that a text has the power to hold our will, we must also know when to back off from the "Mariner's eye" and his "skinny hand." That is to say, we must know when (and how) to question the dialogue. This ability to adjudicate rival truth-claims Gadamer identifies with *phronesis*, that "practical reasonableness" which is the ability to make the right decision at the right time in the right place. We must know that the reality of the text is not, necessarily, the empirical reality of day-to-day life, that it does not correspond

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<sup>109</sup>Gadamer, 370.

<sup>110</sup>See Robert Scholes' *Textual Power: Literary Theory and the Teaching of English* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 18-21.

to some objective, external and eternal verity. We must know with Gadamer's aphorism that "Being that can be understood is language" that linguisticity has the power to shape an individual's understanding, the ability to think about his or her own thinking; and for this reason, an awareness of hermeneutical understanding can develop that individual's ability to decide for herself or himself whether "the story" is more important than "the wedding," or the wedding more important than the story, or, at the very least, to know *when* the story is more important than the wedding and vice versa.

It is the Mariner that we can personify as Gadamer's timeless and overpowering *tradition* -- who *is* the text that holds the power of language, the power of Being that can be understood. Only at the point when the Mariner-As-Tradition (or teacher) fuses horizons with the Wedding Guest-As-Interlocutor (or student) can the discourse become hermeneutically understood and fuse with the "historically effected consciousness" that is understanding. In terms, then, of the educational experience, when a teacher, because of her capacity for "emancipatory reflection," is able to "connect" with her students and effect an openness to tradition -- as the Mariner does with the Wedding Guest -- the power of understanding can find its fullest working expression. Only at that point in the hermeneutical experience is there no pretense of superiority, and only at that point will learning occur so that the student, like the Wedding Guest "the



morrow morn," will go "like one who has been stunned" into self-understanding, "of sense forlorn . . . sadder and wiser."

## CHAPTER 3

### EXPERIENCE

This suggests very well what I would have in the place of "foundation." I would call it "participation," because that is what happens in human life. . . . Participation is indeed a better formulation of what is going on in our life experience than is the foundationalist account of the apodictic evidence of self-consciousness. -- Gadamer, "The Hermeneutics of Suspicion"

If the living, experiencing being is an intimate participant in the activities of the world to which it belongs, then knowledge is a mode of participation, valuable in the degree in which it is effective. -- Dewey, *Democracy and Education*

It should be fairly obvious by now that there is a lot of "meeting" going on in this dissertation. Whether it is the meeting of *Frankenstein* and *Emile*, Gadamer's ontological understanding meeting the pedagogy of understanding and connected teaching or, as we shall see in this chapter, the meeting of Dewey's "experiential continuum" and Gadamer's hermeneutical experience, "meeting" is a necessary condition of philosophical hermeneutics and, by extension, of the educational experience. But with Gadamer (and in my opinion with Dewey) we need to remember that given hermeneutics' "intermediate position" between "familiarity and strangeness," this is not to suggest a *procedure* for understanding why or how these entities are meeting as they are but rather to clarify the "experiential" conditions in which the meeting itself takes place. In

this regard we recall what Gadamer calls a "fusion of horizons" which, as we saw in the previous chapter, actually defines understanding itself. This fusion, according to Gadamer, is marked by dialectical interplay, linguisticity, and historicity insofar as "the horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past," and as we shall see in this chapter, this fusion of horizons also characterizes what Gadamer calls "historically effected consciousness," which, in turn, "has the structure of experience (*Erfahrung*)"<sup>111</sup> Similarly, as John Dewey tells us in *Democracy and Education*, he thinks of "meeting" in terms of democracy -- as "primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience," which is dependent on what he refers to in *Experience and Education* as the past of "the living present," or the past as a "potent agent" for acquainting "the young" with "the living present."<sup>112</sup> For "meeting" in both Gadamer and Dewey, we can read "experience" and still maintain the coherence of their individual philosophies.

What we are leading up to with this initial juxtaposition of Gadamer and Dewey is that they do seem to share a common interest in meeting, and as the above epigraphs suggest, this affinity can be considered from the perspective of their views of the concept of "participation," which is also another way of saying "experience." If

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<sup>111</sup>H-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 306, 346. (Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent references to Gadamer will be from this work.) *Erfahrung* will be a key point in our discussion of *Women's Ways* in the Chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>112</sup>John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: The Free Press, 1916), 87 (hereafter abbreviated in notation as *DE*); and Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), 23 (hereafter abbreviated as *EE*),

we pause for a moment to have a look at the word "participation" etymologically, the propriety becomes even more striking.

"Participation" derives from an Indo-European root that had something to do with "selling" or "making equal." In Latin this becomes the root "par" from "parare," "to equate," as in our current use of the word "par" on the golf course. But perhaps the most relevant usage can be found in the grammatical term "participle," which is a "fusion" or "equalization" of adjective and verb, a hybridization that requires its own category as a "verbal,"<sup>113</sup> which, as we are understanding him, is analogous to what Gadamer means by a "fusion of horizons." And because of this metaphorical relationship to his philosophical hermeneutics, Gadamer gives us a brief commentary on the significance of the word "participation":

Participation is a strange word. Its dialectic consists of the fact that participation is not taking parts, but in a way taking the whole. Everybody who participates in something does not take something away, so that the others cannot have it. The opposite is true: by sharing, by our participating in the things in which we are participating, we enrich them; they do not become smaller, but larger. The whole life of tradition consists exactly in this enrichment so that life is our culture and our past: the whole inner store of our lives is always extending by participating.<sup>114</sup>

In this passage we can almost hear Dewey saying that "no point in the philosophy of progressive education is sounder than its emphasis upon the participation of the learner in the formation of the purposes which direct his activities in the learning process" and that "present experience . . . can expand into the future only as it is enlarged to take

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<sup>113</sup>An example: In the sentence "Shooting stars fell all night," the word "shooting" is the participle as adjective, but "shooting" in another context can also be a verb.

<sup>114</sup>Gadamer, "Hermeneutics of Suspicion," 64.

in the past."<sup>115</sup> Rorty argues for this common element in Gadamer's and Dewey's thought as enabling them to defend themselves against charges of "vulgar relativism." He argues "that what both men put in place of Reason -- the Platonic organ for detecting truth -- is a sense of tradition, of community, of human solidarity . . . [and] this sense is a sufficient defense against vulgar relativism."<sup>116</sup> The persuasiveness of Rorty's angle here on relativistic thinking has been seriously called into question and, for our purposes, is a separate issue from that at hand. What *is* significant for us about Rorty's version of Dewey is that Rorty has recognized and argued for some strong connections between the work of Gadamer and Dewey. And as we shall see at the close of the chapter, this argument for connectedness is also an argument for their having similar views on the nature of the scientific method.

However, an explication of respective philosophies of participation will not be the task of this chapter; instead, the primary task will be to agree with Rorty on the plausibility of a Dewey-Gadamer anti-foundationalist view but to suggest further that this shared interest in "participation" implies a shared sense of "experience" and that this shared sense of "experience" indicates that a compatibility exists between what Gadamer is saying about the hermeneutical experience and what Dewey is calling for when he says

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<sup>115</sup>Dewey, *EE*, 67, 77. This, of course, presupposes a free and open conversation among all people, regardless of gender or race. The next chapter takes up this issue.

<sup>116</sup>Rorty, "Hermeneutics, General Studies, and Teaching," 2-3.

that a philosophy of education requires a theory of experience. Our position is that Dewey's argument for progressive education -- as he spells it out in *Democracy and Education* and *Education and Experience* -- can be thought of as his own treatment of "truth and method" with all of the attendant ambiguities of those two terms taken as one.<sup>117</sup> Dewey's unrelenting antagonism toward the abuse of method or what he calls "straight-jacket and chain gang procedures in education . . . that create only 'sharps' in learning . . . egoistic specialists" puts into relief his philosophy of education as "a constant reorganizing or reconstructing of experience" in which "the aim must always represent a freeing of activities" and "the object and reward of learning is continued capacity for growth."<sup>118</sup> Our contention is that this line of thought is very similar to Gadamer's. The apparent contradiction between the two, however, lies in their respective opinions on the nature of the scientific method, but on this account it seems there is a misunderstanding of both views, for what Dewey is promoting as "scientific method" in education and what Gadamer is challenging as "the abuse of method" in the human sciences are not the same thing. Had Dewey been thinking about the social engineering variety of method that Gadamer attacks, Dewey's detractors most likely would not have accused him so readily of

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<sup>117</sup>In the next chapter, I follow a similar tactic with *Women's Ways of Knowing*. There I draw the following analogy: Gadamer's "truth" is to "constructed knowledge" what "method" is to the perspectives of "received," "subjective," and "procedural knowledge."

<sup>118</sup>Dewey, *DE*, 61, 9, 76, 105, 100.

educational capriciousness and "non-directive nonsense," accusations that eventually outflanked the progressive education movement.

Therefore, as a secondary task, we will argue that Gadamer's hermeneutics -- defined as<sup>119</sup> "the art of employing methods where they belong, not where they don't belong". . . [and] "a protection against the abuse of method" -- can be a supplement to Dewey's problematic conception of scientific method, a conception that caught Dewey up in an educational double bind: For the traditionalists, his scientific method was not scientifically methodical enough, and for the progressives, it was too methodically scientific.<sup>120</sup> In our way of thinking, if we take up this supplementary position, then the compatibility between the educational dimension of Gadamer's hermeneutical experience, on the one hand, and Dewey's theory of experience as requisite for a philosophy of education, on the other, becomes plausible.<sup>121</sup>

We will attempt to make the case for a Gadamer-Dewey connection by way of a three-part strategy: first, to define what Gadamer and Dewey each mean by "experience"; secondly, to describe what we might guardedly call Dewey's "tacit hermeneutics"; and

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<sup>119</sup>Misgeld, 70.

<sup>120</sup>Because Dewey was familiar with Hegel and the work of Schleiermacher, his use of the term "science" may have been a gloss on the German word "Wissenschaft," which, according to the translators of *Truth and Method*, "suggests thorough, comprehensive, and systematic knowledge of something on a self-consciously rational basis" (xviii). This would set it apart from our understanding of the words "science" and "scientific" which we associate more with the German term, *Naturwissenschaften* or "natural sciences."

<sup>121</sup>To use Gadamer's language, "the hermeneutical experience is the corrective by means of which the thinking reason escapes the prison of language, and it is itself verbally constituted" (Gadamer, 402).

then, by way of conclusion, to compare Gadamer's and Dewey's respective ideas of what constitutes scientific method and its relationship to experience as a way of arguing for Gadamer's hermeneutical experience as the philosophy of experience that Dewey spent most of his life trying to clarify as the basis for his philosophy of education.

Any attempt to define "experience" in either Gadamer's or Dewey's usage of the term would require a book-length explication in and of itself. (In fact, both men *have written* book-length explications on the subject: Gadamer's imposing sections in *Truth and Method* and Dewey's *Experience and Nature*.) But in working with Gadamer, the most obvious difficulty is that we are dealing with a second language. For example, as the translators of *Truth and Method* tell us, there are "two separate words for 'experience' in German: *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*. . . *Erlebnis* is something that you have, and thus is connected with a subject and with the subjectivization of aesthetics. *Erfahrung* is something that you undergo, so that subjectivity is overcome and drawn into an event (*Geschehen*) of meaning."<sup>122</sup> In our current English usage, *Erlebnis* is what we would refer to as a "lived-experience," something that has immediacy but is not the usual day-in-and-day-out routine of living. Rather, as Gadamer explains it,<sup>123</sup> *Erlebnis* is something that "achieves permanence, weight, and significance from out of the transience of experiencing."

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<sup>122</sup>Gadamer, xiii-xiv.

<sup>123</sup>*Ibid.*, 61.



For instance, in the course of our everyday experiences, if we had the unexpected opportunity to meet someone who is unusually fun to be with, we might remark to someone else later that meeting that person was a "real experience." This kind of experience "makes a special impression that gives it lasting importance"<sup>124</sup> and is also evident when we talk about "experiencing" works of art or of unusual scenery in nature. Of oblique significance for us here is that it was the nineteenth-century hermeneutic philosopher, Wilhelm Dilthey, who, in his 1905 *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung (Experience and Poetry)*, succinctly formulated this concept of *Erlebnis*. That Dilthey's thought in this regard might have had some bearing on Dewey's use of "experience" is an inviting prospect, especially given Dilthey's concept of *Erlebnis* as occupying an "intermediate position between speculation and empiricism,"<sup>125</sup> or between the experience and its result. We also know that Dewey was familiar with the work of that other key figure in the development of modern hermeneutics, Friedrich Schleiermacher,<sup>126</sup> the first biography of whom was written by Dilthey.

But it is the second German word for "experience," *Erfahrung*, that is most closely allied with the hermeneutical experience as Gadamer addresses it, specifically in Part II, section II. 3 of *Truth and Method*, the same section where he works through the

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<sup>124</sup>Ibid.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., 65.

<sup>126</sup>See Dewey's *The Quest for Certainty*, 307.

implications of "understanding" for the hermeneutical experience. Etymologically rooted in the German word for "journey" or "travel," *Fahre* (the same root for our words "fare" and "ferry"), *Erfahrung*

"provides the basis in our actual lives for the specifically hermeneutic way we are related to other persons and to our cultural past, namely dialogue and especially the dialogue of question and answer. This kind of "experience" is not the residue of isolated moments, but an ongoing integrative process in which what we encounter widens our horizon, but only by overturning an existing perspective, which we can then perceive was erroneous or at least narrow. Its effect, therefore, is not simply to make us "knowing," to add to our stock of information, but to give us that implicit sense of broad perspectives, of the range of human life and culture, and of our own limits that constitutes a non-dogmatic wisdom."<sup>127</sup>

This is the experience that we have in mind when we speak of an "experienced person" or when we encounter an advertisement that stakes a company's reputation on so many "years of experience." It characterizes the experienced person as someone "who, because of the many experiences he has had and the knowledge he has drawn from them, is particularly well-equipped to have new experiences and to learn from them."<sup>128</sup> And in this sense it *is* a journey, a life's journey.

But as we have seen with Gadamer's concept of understanding, a simple definition is impossible when describing the nature of philosophical hermeneutics. When we find ourselves trying to focus on one condition as we are doing here with "experience," we soon discover that we must deal with certain other conditions, which are those things that make an experienced person "experienced,"<sup>129</sup> in a

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<sup>127</sup>Gadamer, xiii.

<sup>128</sup>*Ibid.*, 355.

fashion that suggests a seemingly endless array of Chinese boxes. So rather than open more boxes than we need, we will attempt to fill in between the lines of *Erfahrung* when we discuss Dewey's tacit hermeneutics.

If being semi-obscure were a criterion for hermeneutical status, then Dewey's theory of experience would rank with Gadamer's. The reason for our inability to hold Dewey and Gadamer to one definition seems to lie in one of the conditions necessary to both theories: a kind of "freeing activity" that Dewey calls "growth" and that Gadamer refers to as "openness" or "the awareness of one's own historicity." We cannot fingerprint what Dewey means by "experience" because if we could, we would be, in effect, establishing hard evidence for "a moving force," a "liberating power" that can be thought of as freedom itself. More to the point, experience for Dewey is more like an "experiential continuum," wherein "the function of knowledge is to make one experience freely available in other experiences." And the process that allows this to happen is the consequence of "the two principles of continuity and interaction . . . the longitudinal and lateral aspects of experience."<sup>130</sup> In *Democracy and Education* he gives what seems to me to be the clearest "definition" of this continuum:

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<sup>129</sup>For Gadamer this is the "contemporaneousness" of the "fusion of horizons," "historically effected consciousness," "tradition," "language," "openness," "the structure of the question," "phronesis," and "application."

<sup>130</sup>See Dewey, *EE*, 38; Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, 93; *EE*, 28; *DE*, 339; and *EE*, 44.

The nature of experience can be understood only by noting that it includes an active and a passive element peculiarly combined. On the one hand, experience is *trying* -- a meaning which is made explicit in the connected term experiment. On the passive, it is *undergoing*. When we experience something we act upon it, we do something with it; then we suffer or undergo the consequences. We do something to the thing and then it does something to us in return . . . The connection of these two phases of experience measures the fruitfulness or value of the experience. Mere activity does not constitute experience. It is dispersive, centrifugal, dissipating. Experience as trying involves change, but change is meaningless transition unless it is consciously connected with the return wave of consequences which flow from it. When an activity is continued *into* the undergoing of consequences, when the change made by action is reflected back into a change made in us, the mere flux is loaded with significance. We learn something.<sup>131</sup>

This has the ring of what Gadamer is saying about historicity, "historically effected consciousness," and "the negation of experience" that sets *Erfahrung* apart as something that somebody "undergoes." Later we will have more to say about these echoes, but at this point, we need to establish some basic groundwork for our hypothesis that there does in fact exist at least a tacit hermeneutical awareness on Dewey's part.

When in his *Hermeneutics and Education* (1992) Shaun Gallagher appeals to the authority of Dewey's *Democracy and Education*, specifically to Dewey's poetical image of "luminous familiar spots from which helpful suggestions may spring," Gallagher is building his case for reasserting "the essential connections between interpretation and education within the contemporary framework of hermeneutics." For Dewey, the image occurs as he is building *his* case for the connection between experience and effective thinking: "A large part of the art of instruction lies in making the difficulty of

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<sup>131</sup>Dewey, *DE*, 139.

new problems large enough to challenge thought, and small enough so that, in addition to the confusion naturally attending the novel elements, there shall be 'luminous familiar spots from which helpful suggestions may spring.' As for Dewey's being in "the loop" of the hermeneutical circle, implicit in those "luminous familiar spots," Gallagher says, is the concept of "a forestructure which conditions one's initial approach [to a given problem] and is refined or revised in the process of learning." This "initial approach," as the argument goes, is that workhorse of Deweyan education, the hypothesis. And since the hypothesis "will always be an interpretation and will always depend on fore-conceptions" (in this case the "luminous spots"), then it follows for Gallagher that "if we consider the procedure of hypothesis formation as one model of learning, then learning is clearly defined by the hermeneutical circle." And we can follow that circle still further by assuming that Dewey's own thinking here belies an antecedent foreconception of the hermeneutical tradition itself.<sup>132</sup>

That that forestructure was the crystallization of what William James called the "nitrous oxide intoxication of absolute idealism," (which really meant *Hegel's* theory of the constitutive power of Thought), we know from Dewey himself. In 1945, Dewey, with an analogously circular image, remarked that "I jumped *through* Hegel, I should say, not just out of him. I took some of the hoop . . . with me,

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<sup>132</sup>Gallagher, 71, 2, 157, 71, 72.

and also carried away considerable of the paper the hoop was filled with."<sup>133</sup> Earlier (1930), in his brief and only autobiographical account of his own *Bildung*, his own intellectual development ("From Absolutism to Experimentalism"), he says it this way:<sup>134</sup> "I drifted away from Hegelianism in the next fifteen years [after completion of Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins in 1884]; the word 'drifting' expresses the slow and, for a long time, the imperceptible character of the movement, though it does not convey the impression that there was an adequate cause for change. Nevertheless I should never think of ignoring, much less denying, what an astute critic occasionally refers to as a novel discovery -- that acquaintance with Hegel has left a permanent deposit in my thinking . . . Were it possible for me to be a devotee of any system, I still should believe that there is greater richness and greater variety of insight in Hegel than in any other single systematic philosopher -- though when I say this I exclude Plato, who still provides my favourite [sic] philosophic reading."

What Gallagher is after, however, is to argue neither for Dewey as a closet hermeneuticist nor as a repressed Hegelian, but rather to argue that in Dewey and Gadamer -- because of their shared Hegelian influence -- significant evidence exists to support the claim that the educational experience itself is hermeneutical and that since education is, in fact, interpretational, then *learning*, rather than the standard hermeneutical *reading* of a text, is the more appropriate

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<sup>133</sup>Robert Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*, 14.

<sup>134</sup>John McDermott, ed., *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, 8.

"paradigm" for the educational process. We can take his key point here to be that "the paradigm of learning is one that takes its bearing from the interpretational *process* rather than from the interpretational *object*."<sup>135</sup> But our intention is not to argue in support of Gallagher's thesis directly, but inversely, to appropriate his Gadamer-based assertion that "the educational experience is always interpretational" in order to set up our contention that the philosophy of experience needed for the "new" Deweyan education can be understood via Gadamer's understanding of *Erfahrung*. What we are trying to make of Dewey's hermeneutical tendency, then, is to emphasize that Gallagher discusses it within the foundational context of his thesis, within what he calls a "moderate hermeneutics" -- one specifically based on Gadamer's "philosophical hermeneutics."

Gallagher's discussion of Dewey, Gadamer, hermeneutics, and education is not an isolated case. As we have seen, ten years before Gallagher's placing Dewey within the hermeneutical tradition, Richard Rorty was writing explicitly about Dewey and the "hermeneutical stance." Pointing out that hermeneutics, in a "loose but useful sense," has "a primarily negative meaning. . . something which is *not* scientific inquiry, as such inquiry has been traditionally understood," he then goes on to "discuss the question of how education might be conceived if one starts from Nietzschean rather than Platonic assumptions . . . to identify the hermeneutic stance with something

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<sup>135</sup>Gallagher, 331.

which may seem tamer and more familiar and more manageable -- namely Deweyan pragmatism." In order to make his point about Dewey and hermeneutics, Rorty enlists the help of Gadamer who, in Rorty's estimation, is the "principal example of a hermeneutic philosopher," through whom the hermeneutical stance can be understood as "an alternative to the notion of an 'objective truth.'" "On Dewey's alternative account, as on Gadamer's," Rorty argues, "we need to think of the goal of inquiry and of life not as getting in touch with something that exists independently of ourselves, but as *Bildung*, self-formation, what Dewey liked simply to call 'growth.' In particular, we need to see education not as helping to get us in touch with something non-human called Truth or Reality, but rather in touch with our own potentialities."<sup>136</sup>

It seems that this hermeneutical stance is a very helpful way to think about Dewey's philosophy of education because it can help us to understand one of Dewey's prerequisites *for* that education -- a philosophy of *experience*. In *Experience and Education* he puts it this way: "The lesson for progressive education is that it requires in an urgent degree, a degree more pressing than was incumbent upon former innovators, a philosophy of education based upon a philosophy of experience." And twenty-two years earlier in *Democracy and Education*, he is arguing for "a new philosophy of experience and

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<sup>136</sup>Rorty, "Hermeneutics, General Studies, and Teaching," 1-3. In her recent discussion of creative democracy and education, Nancy Warehime has noted that "the similarities between Dewey and Gadamer are apparent, Rorty claims, in their commonly held understanding that experience is essentially linguistic and historical" (74).



knowledge, a philosophy which no longer puts experience in opposition to rational knowledge and explanation."<sup>137</sup> But his attempt at actually formulating such a philosophy -- which he termed either "empirical naturalism" or "naturalistic empiricism" or "naturalistic humanism" -- appeared in 1925, first as a series of lectures, then published that same year as *Experience and Nature*.<sup>138</sup> However, the reviews were mixed, and in the long run, even for Dewey himself, the project was disappointing. Rorty attributes this to Dewey's wanting "to be as naturalistic as Locke and as historicist as Hegel."<sup>139</sup>

Implicit in what Gallagher and Rorty are up to in their approaches to education from a Dewey-Gadamerian hermeneutics, and explicit in what we hope to get at in this chapter is what Dewey himself would have called the "working capital" of further inquiry. Our "working capital" is invested in the hunch that Dewey was right about the need for "a new philosophy of experience" to underwrite a new philosophy of education, but that he did not completely succeed in clarifying<sup>140</sup> the relationship of that theory to the practice of education. However, in the bearings Rorty has taken from Gadamer's

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<sup>137</sup>Dewey, *EE*, 29; and *DE*, 273.

<sup>138</sup>This was two years before Heidegger's revolutionary *Sein und Zeit* and ten years before Gadamer began the notes which were to become -- not until 1960 -- *Truth and Method*.

<sup>139</sup>Rorty, "Consequences of Pragmatism," 1982, 82.

<sup>140</sup>I'm reminded here of Dewey's own self-criticism in "From Absolutism" where he says ". . . I am dubious of my own ability to reach inclusive systematic unity. . . ." (McDermott, 9). It is a "dubiousness" that R.W. Sleeper reads as a despair Dewey had toward the end of his life of "making himself clear. He still wanted what he had wanted all along, to communicate the connections of things in experience with things in existence" (Sleeper, *The Necessity of Pragmatism*, 116). One might also recall B.F. Skinner's qualified praise of Dewey for throwing out "aversive educational practices" but having "too little to put in its place" (Skinner, *The Technology of Teaching*, 58).

philosophical hermeneutics relative to Dewey and in what Gallagher has appropriated for his own working capital in arguing for a fundamental interrelationship between hermeneutics and education, the basic groundwork for that philosophy of experience has been laid out.

But before "cashing in" on that working capital by putting our own hypothesis up for collateral, our own Deweyan "incursion into the novel," a biographical digression here might help to clarify Dewey's persistent worry and concern over the nature and legitimacy of *experience* as a philosophical concept. In "From Absolutism," he says that experience "should not be treated even by a philosopher as the germ of a disease to which he needs to develop resistance." And Rorty, in his "Dewey's Metaphysics," tells us that "very near the end of his life, Dewey hoped to write a new edition of *Experience and Nature*, 'changing the title as well as the subject matter from *Nature and Experience* [sic] to *Nature and Culture*.'" Rorty goes on to say that "In a letter to Bentley he [Dewey] says 'I was dumb not to have seen the need for such a shift when the old text was written. I was still hopeful that the philosophic word 'Experience' could be redeemed by being returned to its idiomatic usages."

Rorty goes on to emphasize that Dewey "was always to insist that his opponents were those who erected dualisms because they 'abandoned the acknowledgement of the primacy and ultimacy of gross

experience -- primary as it is given in an uncontrolled form, ultimate as it is given in a more regulated and significant form -- a form made possible by the methods and results of reflective experience.” Then Rorty gets to the point of his essay: “Dewey’s mistake -- and it was a trivial and unimportant mistake, even though I have devoted most of this essay to it -- was the notion that criticism of culture had to take the form of a redescription of ‘nature’ or ‘experience’ or both. Had Dewey written the book called *Nature and Culture*, which was to replace *Experience and Nature*, he might have felt able to forget the Aristotelian and Kantian models [categories or distinctions] and simply have been Hegelian all the way, as he was in much of his other (and best) work.”<sup>141</sup> We can take this to mean that had Dewey, as a “reconstructed” Hegelian, readdressed his thinking about “experience-and-nature-and-culture” *hermeneutically* and, ultimately, in its interrelationship with education, he would have appropriated an understanding of hermeneutical experience that might have been akin to Gallagher’s appropriation of Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics for that same purpose. This claim is not so farfetched as it might first appear. We can take our cues from Gallagher, Gadamer, and Rorty in this regard but take heart from Robert Hollinger who, in his *Hermeneutics and Praxis* (1985),<sup>142</sup> has recognized the comparative hermeneutics of Heidegger and Gadamer, the Rortyan pragmatism of Dewey, and the “possible synthesis of compatible lines

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<sup>141</sup> McDermott, 9; Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, 72, 80, 85.

<sup>142</sup> Hollinger, *Hermeneutics and Praxis*, ix. (We remember, too, that Gadamer was one of Heidegger’s students.)

of development." Which is to say that by extension, we can connect Gadamer to Dewey through Rorty.

But it seems that Dewey *did*, in fact, thirteen years later, have at least a preliminary vision of *Nature and Culture* -- a "recontextualized" version that he called *Experience and Education*. In that book Dewey doesn't waste any time getting to the point. In the first sentence of the "Preface," we are told that "all social movements involve conflicts which are reflected intellectually in controversies."<sup>143</sup> With this seemingly commonsensical observation, however, he is setting us up for a major policy statement about education. He goes on to remind us that, yes, education should also be included in this "arena of social struggles, practical and theoretical," but "as for theory, at least as far as educational theory is concerned, the practical conflicts and the controversies that are conducted upon the level of these conflicts, only set a problem." Now it becomes "the business of an "intelligent theory of education to ascertain the causes for the conflicts," then to come up with a "plan of operations," which will have as its source "*a level deeper and more inclusive than is represented by the practices and ideas of the contending parties*" [italics mine].<sup>144</sup> This circular or spiraling movement of social movement-to-conflict-to-controversy-to-problem-to-cause-to-plan-of-operation takes us right back to the

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<sup>143</sup>Dewey, *EE*, 5.

<sup>144</sup>*Ibid.*

social milieu but now a *reconstructed* social setting or culture -- probably what Dewey belatedly thought of as the *Culture* of the ill-fated title of his work on metaphysics. Interesting to note here in regards to the continuity of Dewey's thinking is that twenty-two years earlier in *Democracy and Education*, he makes the comment that a new conception of experience (his) made possible by such things as psychology, industrial methods, and the experimental method in science "reinstates the idea of the ancients that experience is primarily practical, not cognitive -- a matter of doing and undergoing the consequences of doing. But the ancient theory is *transformed by realizing that doing may be directed so as to take up into its own content all which thought suggests* [italics mine] and so as to result in securely tested knowledge. 'Experience' then ceases to be empirical and becomes experimental."<sup>145</sup>

Dewey's definition of education as a "continuous reconstruction of experience" begins to sound like Heidegger's description of the hermeneutical circle cited by Gadamer in *Truth and Method*: "It is not to be reduced to the level of a vicious circle, or even of a circle that is merely tolerated. In the circle is hidden a positive possibility of the most primordial kind of knowing, and we genuinely grasp this possibility only when we have understood that our first, last, and constant task in interpreting is never to allow our fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception to be presented to us by fancies and popular conceptions, but rather to make the scientific theme secure

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<sup>145</sup>Dewey, *DE*, 276.

by working out these fore-structures in terms of the things themselves." Gadamer comments that, "What Heidegger is working out here is not primarily a prescription for the practice of understanding, but a description of the way interpretive understanding is achieved."<sup>146</sup> The point of Heidegger's "hermeneutical reflection" is not to prove that such a circle exists but to show that this circle possesses "an ontologically powerful significance" in terms of tradition. *A propos* here is one of those points that Rorty always seems to have so much fun in making: " . . . if the only choice is between Platonism and pragmatism, Heidegger would wryly and ironically opt for pragmatism. . . . This qualified sympathy for pragmatism is clearest in *Being and Time*, the book which Dewey described as 'sounding like a description of 'the situation' in transcendental German.'"<sup>147</sup> The "situation" to which Dewey is referring here is what we might term the "experiential unit" for his criteria of experience and is, as we saw above, defined by the *interaction* and *continuity* "going on between an individual and objects and other persons." *Interaction* and *situation* are, as Dewey says, "inseparable from each other": "Continuity and interaction in their active union with each other provide the measure of the educative significance and value of an experience. The immediate and direct concern of an educator is then with the situations in which

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<sup>146</sup>Gadamer, 266.

<sup>147</sup>Rorty, *Philosophical Papers*, vol. 2, 32.

interaction takes place."<sup>148</sup>

For Gadamer, this concept of "tradition" has a special significance, for the working-out-of-tradition or historically effected consciousness "has the structure of experience." It is *experience (Erfahrung)* "which provides the basis in our actual lives for the specifically hermeneutic way we are related to other persons and to our cultural past, namely, dialogue and especially the dialogue of question and answer. This process of historically effected consciousness (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein*) is ". . . the consciousness effected in the course of history and determined by history and the consciousness of being thus effected and determined." And it is this "openness to tradition which is characteristic of historically effected consciousness that constitutes the highest type of hermeneutical experience," a concept of experience, we must remember, that distinguishes historically effected consciousness by what Gadamer terms "readiness": "The hermeneutical consciousness culminates not in methodological sureness of itself, but in the same *readiness for experience* [italics mine] that distinguishes the experienced man [sic] from the man captivated by dogma." And finally in this regard: "A person who believes he is free of prejudices, relying on the objectivity of his procedures and denying that he is himself conditioned by historical circumstances, experiences the power of the prejudices that unconsciously dominate him as a vis a tergo."

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<sup>148</sup>Dewey, *EE*, 43-45. Put in Heideggerian terms, we might say that the immediate and direct concern of an educator is with *Dasein* or "being-in-the-world", forestructure, and with the consciousness that tradition always already *is*.

With this admittedly circumscribed attempt at describing Gadamer's theory of the hermeneutical experience, We have been trying to move toward a clarification of Gadamer's claim that history, tradition, experience, understanding, and language (or taken as a whole the "historically effected consciousness") are all bound up together in the hermeneutical act of interpretation ("Understanding is always interpretation, and hence interpretation is the explicit form of understanding").<sup>149</sup> It would follow then -- as Gallagher maintains -- that if the educational experience is indeed always hermeneutical, then the educational experience is, itself, forestructured by that same historically effected consciousness.

Another way to come at this is to emphasize one other very important Deweyan idea in Gadamer: Gadamer's concept of the "horizon." Gadamer defines horizon as "the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point." He goes on to say that the concept of horizon is essential to the concept of "situation," which, by definition, is "a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision." Applied to the thinking mind, "horizon" is characterized by "the way in which thought is tied to its finite determinacy and the way one's vision is gradually expanded." According to Gadamer, a person who "has an horizon" knows "the relative significance of everything in that horizon, whether it is near or far, great or small." Similarly, "working out of the hermeneutical

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<sup>149</sup>Gadamer, 346, xxxiv, 361, 362, 360, 307.



situation means acquiring the right horizon of inquiry for the questions evoked by the encounter with tradition." And finally: "The historical movement of human life consists in the fact that it is never absolutely bound to any one standpoint, and hence can never have a truly closed horizon. The horizon is, rather, something into which we move and that moves with us. Horizons change for a person who is moving. Thus the horizon of the past, out of which all human life lives and which exists in the form of tradition, is always in motion. The surrounding horizon is not set in motion by historical consciousness, but in it the motion becomes aware of itself." For Gadamer the horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past. *"Rather, understanding is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves."*<sup>150</sup>

Immediately apparent here, perhaps more so than anywhere else in the conversation between the Gadamer-Dewey "text-horizons," is Dewey's question, "How shall the young become acquainted with the past in such a way that the acquaintance is a potent agent in appreciation of the living present?" This "past of the living present" is a good shorthand way of describing Gadamer's "fusion of horizons," which, we must remember, is also Gadamer's definition of understanding, hence the link between experience and understanding on the one hand and, from a Deweyan perspective, education on the other. But even more relevant to Gadamer's description of the ever-

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 302, 304, 306.

movingness of one's historical horizon is Dewey's "principle of continuity of experience" by which he means "that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after." He then quotes the appropriate lines from Tennyson's "Ulysses": ". . . all experience is an arch wherethro' Gleams that untraveled world, whose margin fades/ For ever and for ever when I move." Gadamer might have just as appropriately quoted the same lines to illustrate his evermoving horizon of historically effected consciousness.<sup>151</sup>

To read Dewey hermeneutically, then, is to *enact* the hermeneutical experience of the fusion<sup>152</sup> of horizons in and of itself. (Are we reading Dewey through Gadamer or Gadamer through Dewey?) Like the wordplay in "fusion" and in Gadamer's historically effected consciousness, in reading Dewey hermeneutically we find ourselves in that *in-between-ness* upon which, Gadamer believes, the work of hermeneutics is based. It is a "polarity of familiarity and strangeness . . . . The true locus of hermeneutics is this *in-between*." But here too, as we said at the outset, we must remember Gadamer's further insistence that, "Given the intermediate position in which hermeneutics operates, it follows that its work is not to develop a procedure of understanding, but to clarify the conditions in which understanding takes place."

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<sup>151</sup> Dewey, *EE*, 23, 35.

<sup>152</sup> I am always reminded of the propriety of the nuclear physicist's definition of "fusion" as a kind of "continuous reconstruction" of energy.

So, at the familiar end anyway, what we are proposing here as an approach to Dewey's philosophy of education based upon the hermeneutic experience is not a prescription or procedure for a new educational methodology. Indeed, one of Gadamer's strongest points about the nature of hermeneutics is that it "is the art of employing methods where they belong, not where they don't belong." Instead, what we have been attempting to do is to clarify some of the conditions in which understanding can take place, specifically, a recognition of the following: 1) Dewey's "social movement circle" as a variant of the hermeneutic circle and that that structure is the structure of experience; 2) The hermeneutical implications of historicity and interdisciplinarity in Dewey's observation that because "the objectives of learning are in the future and its immediate materials are in present experience, they can be carried into effect only in the degree that present experience is stretched, as it were, backward," expanding into the future only as it is also enlarged to take in the past; 3) This historical dialectic as suggestive of Dewey's sense of a Gadamerian "fusion of horizons" and its direct relationship to understanding; 4) Dewey's prescription for the *situation* as dependent upon the two inseparable principles of "interaction" and "continuity," the "longitudinal and lateral aspects of experience" as another way of getting at Gadamerian dialectic and historicity; 5) Dewey's use of the word "reconstruction" in his lifelong insistence on education as the "continuous reconstruction of

experience" as not synonymous with *repeatability*, e.g., in the positivist's sense of a capacity to *repeat* an experiment for verifiability.<sup>153</sup> Rather, as Rorty has spent a professional lifetime arguing, it can be best understood to mean *redescription*, what Gadamer characterizes as "an ongoing reacquisition that proceeds into infinity."<sup>154</sup>

By way of conclusion, we need to take a magnified look at what appears to be a formidable obstacle to any attempt at claiming a compatibility between Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics and Dewey's theory of experience as a basis for a philosophy of education, namely, their views on scientific method. Gadamer's hermeneutics -- as representative of the current reputation of hermeneutics in general -- "has a primarily negative meaning: it is something which is *not* scientific inquiry, as such inquiry has been traditionally understood."<sup>155</sup> At the other extreme is Dewey's reputation as the personification of that tradition. However, these interpretations do not follow from what each man actually says.

Throughout his work, Gadamer neither disparages science nor the science of inquiry, which for him we can think of as his version of the dialectic or "the structure of the question [that] is implicit in all experience." For example, Gadamer, writing in the "Foreword" to the Second Edition of *Truth and Method* says in no uncertain terms that

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<sup>153</sup>Dewey, *EE*, 77, 44.

<sup>154</sup>Gadamer, "The Problem of the Historical Consciousness," 60.

<sup>155</sup>Rorty, "Hermeneutics, General Studies, and Teaching," 1.

"If there is any practical consequence of the present investigation, it certainly has nothing to do with an 'unscientific commitment'; instead, it is concerned with the 'scientific' integrity of acknowledging the commitment in all understanding." A few paragraphs later he adds, "This does not in the slightest prevent the methods of modern natural science from being applicable to the social world . . . . I did not remotely intend to deny the necessity of methodical work within the human sciences . . . . The difference that confronts us is not in the method but in the objectives of knowledge." And in his "Afterword" he takes this a step further by criticizing those who are so caught up in "the methodologism of theory of science that all they can think about is rules and their application. They fail to recognize that reflection about practice is not methodology . . . . Despite all the differences between the natural sciences and [human sciences] there is really no disagreement between them about the immanent validity of critical methodology in the sciences." And finally, Gadamer makes it clear what the real problem is:

The final confusion that dominates methodology of the sciences is, I think, the degeneration of the concept of practice. This concept lost its legitimacy in the age of science with its ideal of certainty. For since science views its purpose as isolating the causes of events -- natural and historical -- it is acquainted with practice only as the application of science. But that is a 'practice' that requires no special account. Thus the concept of technology displaced that of practice; in other words, the competence of experts has marginalized political reason.<sup>156</sup>

Dewey, on the other side of this coin, neither promotes a hard-

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<sup>156</sup>Gadamer, 362, xxviii, xxix, 556.

line objectivist's approach to scientific method nor does he give any evidence that he is sympathetic with the social engineers of his day. For instance, in *The Quest for Certainty* Dewey includes a chapter on "The Supremacy of Method," but instead of a mini-treatise on methodologism, we find that Dewey is reminding us that, "When action lacks means for control of external conditions, it takes the form of acts which are prototypes of rite and cult. Intelligence signifies that direct action has become indirect. It continues to be overt, but it is directed into channels of examination of conditions and doings that are tentative and preparatory." And in his next chapter, Dewey gives us a good idea of what "significant change . . . would issue from carrying over experimental method from physics to man [in regard to] the import of standards, principles, rules." He tells us that "these and all tenets and creeds about good and goods, would be recognized hypotheses. Instead of being rigidly fixed, they would be treated as intellectual instruments to be tested and confirmed -- and altered -- through consequences acting upon them. They would lose all pretence of finality -- the ulterior source of dogmatism." In our reading of Dewey's experimental method, the "hypothesis" is, as we said earlier, the "workhorse" of his approach to method, and based on what he says about its role in the experiential continuum, when it is taken seriously, it will allow philosophy to make good on its claim to universality but only when philosophy "connects this universality with the formation of directive hypotheses instead of with a

sweeping pretension to knowledge of universal Being."<sup>157</sup>

This sounds very much like Gadamer's appeal for a consciousness of the "tyranny of the hidden prejudice," his detail of the structure of the question, and his explication of a hermeneutical understanding that "always involves applying the meaning understood." Finally, on the role of reflection (or lack thereof) and the "absoluteness of the ideal of 'science,' Gadamer's words could be easily those of Dewey: Gadamer says, "A philosophy of the sciences that understands itself as a theory of scientific method and dismisses any inquiry that cannot be meaningfully characterized as a process of trial and error does not recognize that by this very criterion it is outside science." And Dewey puts it this way: "Thought or reflection . . . is the discernment of the relation between what we try to do and what happens in consequence. No experience having a meaning is possible without some element of thought . . . . In discovery of the detailed connections of our activities and what happens in consequence, the thought implied in cut and try experience is made explicit." For Gadamer as for Dewey, scientific method does not lead to things like behaviorism or behavioral objectives in education, and Dewey would be in complete agreement with Gadamer when the latter says that, "The paradigm of 'posing and testing hypotheses' pertains to all research, in the historical sciences too . . . and it always presents the danger that the rationality of procedure will be taken for a sufficient legitimation of the

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<sup>157</sup>Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, 223, 277, 310.

significance of what is 'known' through it."<sup>158</sup>

In closing, we will follow up this last citation with an argument that Rorty develops in his essay "Method, Social Science, and Social Hope," an argument that lends further support to the idea that Dewey is not at odds with Gadamer (and the "hermeneutical stance") about scientific method. Rorty's main point is that contrary to the positivists' thinking about the "nature" of science and scientific success, that is, "that discovery of this nature will give us a 'method,' and that following that method will enable us to penetrate beneath the appearances and see nature 'in its own terms,'" Nature does not "speak" or favor any one "true" language, so that any attempt to "read," "decode," or otherwise discover "Nature's Own Language" is misguided from the start. However, according to Rorty, historically this has not been the case. These same positivists "have spent the last hundred years trying to use notions like 'objectivity,' 'rigor,' and 'method' to isolate science from nonscience . . . [and this has been in spite of the fact that] "neither realism nor idealism could explain just what the imagined 'correspondence' between nature's language and current scientific jargon could consist in." Rorty calls for reinforcements from the work of Thomas Kuhn, whose thinking has significantly influenced our understanding of "scientific structures." Rorty sums it up this way: ". . . scientific breakthroughs are not so much a matter of deciding which of various alternative hypotheses

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<sup>158</sup>Gadamer, 333, 554, 145, 560.



are true, but of finding the right jargon in which to frame hypotheses in the first place." And, elsewhere, "If 'scientific method' means merely being rational in some given area of inquiry, then it has a perfectly reasonable 'Kuhnian' sense -- it means obeying the normal conventions of your discipline, not fudging the data *too* much, not letting your hopes and fears influence your conclusions unless those hopes and fears are shared by all those who are in the same line of work, being open to refutation by experience, not blocking the road to inquiry." Having thus established his position regarding scientific method, Rorty states the aim of his essay as recommending "a Deweyan approach to both social science and morality, one which emphasizes the utility of narratives and vocabularies rather than the objectivity of laws and theories," and that "it would do no harm to adopt the term 'hermeneutics' for the sort of by-guess-and-by-God hunt for new terminology which characterizes the initial stages of any new line of inquiry." And lastly, ". . . Dewey emphasizes that this move 'beyond method' gives mankind an opportunity to grow up, to be free to make itself, rather than seeking direction from some imagined outside source."<sup>159</sup> If we too can move beyond method, then it might be helpful to say that we have begun to clarify some of the conditions necessary for the understanding of a Deweyan philosophy of education based upon a hermeneutical philosophy of experience -- in all of its familiarity *and* strangeness.

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<sup>159</sup>Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, 192-195, 199-200, 204. We might note here in passing that Gadamer, too, is sympathetic to Kuhn's thought. (See Gadamer, 283n, and Gadamer (1985), 179.)

## CHAPTER 4

*BILDUNG*

"God ain't a he or a she, but a It."

-- Shug to Celie in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*

Here lies the greatest danger under which our civilization  
stands: the elevation of adaptive qualities to privileged  
status.

-- Gadamer, "What Is Practice?"

It is enough to say that we understand in a different way,  
if we understand at all.

-- Gadamer, *Truth and Method*

I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess.

-- Donna Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs"

In the previous two chapters we took a close look at Gadamer's "understanding" (*Verstehen*) and "experience" (*Erfahrung*), respectively, as two of the three conditions which give unity and coherence to philosophical hermeneutics as well as to the educational experience. In this chapter we turn to *Bildung* -- the German word in Gadamer's hermeneutics that is roughly synonymous with the process of educative acculturation -- as the third and final condition for the completion of that unity. Our approach will be the same as it was for the other two chapters, where we attempted to demonstrate the compatibility of philosophical hermeneutics to the theory and practice of education. In the case of "understanding," we tried to show that philosophical hermeneutics is compatible with what we might refer to collectively<sup>160</sup> as the "pedagogies of tacit

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<sup>160</sup>As we pointed out in Chapter 2, this includes "pedagogies of understanding,"

hermeneutics." For "experience," we set out to compare John Dewey's theory of experience and Gadamer's hermeneutical experience as a means of claiming a place for philosophical hermeneutics in the American liberal democratic tradition of Dewey's progressive education. Now, with *Bildung*, we turn to the work of Mary Belenky et al and their study, *Women's Ways of Knowing* (1986).<sup>161</sup> Because this work builds on the earlier studies of Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice* (1982) and Nel Noddings' *Caring* (1984), we will develop our argument indirectly on the basis of these interrelated works as a way of understanding in a different way if we are to understand women's and men's "ways of knowing" at all.<sup>162</sup> But our intention is neither to get pulled into the ongoing debate over what constitutes specific feminist theories nor to argue for or against the validity of Gilligan's/*Women's Ways* research as an epistemology of empowerment.<sup>163</sup> Our task is to generate a conception of *Bildung* that mediates "understanding" and "experience" hermeneutically, that

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"constructivist" pedagogies, and educational practices that have incorporated philosophical hermeneutics (either explicitly or implicitly).

<sup>161</sup>M. Belenky, B. Clinchy, N. Goldberger, J. Tarule, *Women's Ways of Knowing* (New York: Basic Books, 1986).

<sup>162</sup>Rather than having to rely on the problematic category of "cultural feminism," at one point I thought my argument might be better served if I had come up with my own term for the kind of feminist epistemology that "women's ways" represents, e.g., "hermeneutical feminism," or "participatory feminism," or "difference feminism," or something like what Charlotte Bunch calls "nonaligned feminism." But I thought better of doing so mainly because I found myself stepping into the trap that Carol Tavis calls the "mismeasure of woman"; that is to say, I began to realize that I was measuring "women's ways" against my male conception of a male's theory of understanding, i.e., Gadamer's. In the end, I decided that what I wanted to say about feminism in this regard could best be said by *Women's Ways*, especially given its understanding of "constructed knowledge," and "connected teaching."

<sup>163</sup>One can turn to a variety of sources to follow up on theory classification, e.g., Rosemarie Tong's *Feminist Thought*, and to a growing body of commentary on the Gilligan issue, e.g., Kerber et al (1986), Benhabib (1986), Crysdale (1994).

is, in a non-hegemonic way. But we will not be setting out to do this by reinventing the postmodernist critiques of these power/knowledge structures. We have "crossed the postmodern divide," and critical theory has been unrelenting in rooting out these power structures, yet the jury is still out the extent to which theory has been successful at effecting change, especially in terms of education and the process of *Bildung*. Thus we hear from postmodernists like Linda Nicholson and Susan Hekman who are busy piecing together "elements of a postmodern feminism" and someone like Patti Lather who locates herself in the "liberatory education" movement and is working toward the same goal for "feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern" by focusing on "oppositional discourses of criticism resistance."<sup>164</sup>

What we are proposing in this chapter is similar to these projects, but our emphasis is not on the postmodern as such, nor is it on a postmodern critical feminism, but this is not to dismiss these deconstructive efforts out of hand. Rather, I see what follows as "building"<sup>165</sup> on the terrain cleared off by the critical theorists so that our approach is more pragmatically directed in the sense that *Women's Ways* can be understood as complementing philosophical hermeneutics (and vice versa) in much the same way that we argued in the last chapter for philosophical hermeneutics as supplementing

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<sup>164</sup>See Nicholson's *Feminism/Postmodernism*; Hekman's *Gender and Knowledge*; and Lather's *Getting Smart*, xvii.

<sup>165</sup>The *Bildung*/building near-homophone will be a thematic metaphor for the chapter.

Dewey's theory of experience. To put this another way, what follows is an attempt to bring the critical theorists, the moderate hermeneuticists, and the pragmatists into the same conversation, and, as a variation on how *Women's Ways* conceptualizes "connected teaching," this complementarity can have a practical application in the classroom. What must be kept in mind here, though, is that this is not a one-sided operation. Philosophical hermeneutics, for example, will not be telling *Women's Ways* (or vice versa) what to do in order to effect change within the dominant power structure. What we will see emerge in the course of this chapter is a kind of reciprocating complementarity or a "fusion of horizons" by which philosophical hermeneutics meets certain needs of *Women's Ways* and *Women's Ways* reciprocates. The subsequent widening of horizons that results from this "fusion" is what we will be calling *Bildung*, which, in this context, we might define as the acculturative predisposition to learning, where "learning," as we saw in the previous chapter, is the hermeneutical paradigm. In the educational or classroom context, this "fusion" becomes a practical matter of recognizing the complementarity between *Women's Ways*' advocacy of "connected teaching" and the necessary roles that hermeneutical "understanding" and "experience," for example, play in the development of that pedagogical, ontological, and epistemological mode. The question, then, to which our proposed reciprocation will be an answer is, "How can philosophical hermeneutics, complemented by *Women's Ways*,

account for the gender inequities and 'trait genderizations' that are the direct concerns of feminism and educational theory,<sup>166</sup> and how can this be done without slipping into a feminist essentialism?" Gender is an issue that Gadamer does not confront directly in *Truth and Method* nor does he speak specifically to gender issues elsewhere; however, implicit in philosophical hermeneutics and essential to it is a profound concern for the "Other," for the "I-Thou relationship," and it is here that we will make our case for complementarity.

The direction that we will take in sorting through all of this will be first, to define what philosophical hermeneutics means by *Bildung*; secondly, to clarify the main points of *Women's Ways* and to show how philosophical hermeneutics' *Erfahrung* can complement *Women's Ways*' ambiguous position on cognitive stages of development which, in turn, complements philosophical hermeneutics' apparent silence on educational theory; and third, to show how *Women's Ways*' critique of patriarchal hegemony complements that omission in *Truth and Method* which, in turn, complements contemporary feminism's need for a persuasive rhetoric. (Here the stress will be on what Gadamer holds to be "the fundamental metaphoricity of language.") In other words, we will be striving to

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<sup>166</sup>What is on the line here, as Marjorie Grene has indicated (Wachterhauser, 168) is the problem of how historicity as a defining principle of human being can be within nature. Also see Robin Schott's reply to Weinsheimer, "Whose Home Is It Anyway? A Feminist Response to Gadamer's Hermeneutics" (Silverman, 202).

attain what John Rawls refers to as a "reflective equilibrium" in which Gadamer is complemented in the light of *Women's Ways* and, reciprocally, in which *Women's Ways* is complemented in the light of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, and we must do so without one superceding the other.

What is *Bildung*? Georgia Warnke, who has written extensively on Gadamer, defines it as "the process through which individuals and cultures enter a more and more widely defined community." Similarly, Richard Rorty builds on Dewey's pragmatism to make his point about the fundamental nature of *Bildung*: "we need to think of the goal of inquiry and of life not as getting in touch with something which exists independently of ourselves, but as *Bildung*, self-formation, what Dewey liked simply to call 'growth.'" And Gadamer calls it "the greatest idea of the eighteenth century." But more specifically, according to the translators of *Truth and Method*, "*Bildung* is translated by 'culture' and related forms such as 'cultivation' and 'cultivated' . . . . Gadamer defines *Bildung* as 'the properly human way of developing one's natural talents and capacities.'"<sup>167</sup> But as Gadamer makes clear in his other writings, this association with culture is not blind. He is very much aware that the concept of culture has been and still is used simply as an instrument of domination. However, what remains important for him -- despite the criticism against him of espousing a "universal optimism" -- is "the concept

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<sup>167</sup>See Warnke's *Gadamer*, 173; Rorty's "Hermeneutics, General Studies, and Teaching," 3; and Gadamer's *Truth and Method*, 9 and xii.

that a self can be formed without breaking with or repudiating one's past and that this formation cannot be achieved by any merely technical or methodical means."

In terms of education (Victor Frankenstein and B. F. Skinner notwithstanding), we cannot simply "build" a human being as a craftsperson would make some specific thing. As we saw in Chapter 2 with Joseph Dunne's argument against the behavioral objectives model of education, we cannot be taught *phronesis* because we cannot separate ourselves from it as if it were some technique that can be observed, rehearsed, and replicated. In Gadamer's terms, it happens to us "over and above our wanting and doing." The real question, Gadamer reminds us, is, "However much it is the nature of tradition to exist only through being appropriated, it still is part of the nature of man [sic] to break with tradition, to criticize and dissolve it, and is not what takes place in remaking the real into an instrument of human purpose something far more basic in our relationship to being?" Gadamer also notes that within *Bildung* is the root word *Bild*, 'form,' 'image,' and more particularly, 'picture,'" and the implication here is that "cultivation" is the "figuring out" or "constructing of" a self that *conforms* with an ideal image of the human.<sup>168</sup> But this is not to suggest a Platonic elitism over a democratic view of culture.

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<sup>168</sup>See H-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Weinsheimer and Marshall (New York: Crossroad, 1992). Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent references to Gadamer will be from this work. Also note here the etymological link between "cultivation" as it is used here and "tilling" the earth as it is used in agriculture. Also the Latin root "cultus" or "care" reinforces the *cultural* feminist connection. Compare Dewey's "growth" and, as we will see in Chapter Five, Rousseau's plant metaphors.



As Gadamer surveys the history of the concept, he tells us that, not surprisingly, this "eductive" conception of selfhood is found in medieval mystical thinking, where the image to be drawn out was the image of God in man (literally "male"). In other words, with dogma comes the elitist conception of a perfection of form, which is, in this case, "God's Image."<sup>169</sup> Historically, this becomes more evident with the word's obvious connection to pictures and images, as aestheticism begins to play a very important role in the development of *Bildung*, and the perfection of the human image to be "drawn" is as a work of art, something like the "portrait" of Oscar Wilde's Dorian Gray. In this regard we can "hear" that history as it is expressed in the modulated expressions of the root word itself. As Joel Weinsheimer says, "Gadamer structures the first third of *Truth and Method* around *Bildung* and its linguistic cognates: *Bild* (form, image, picture), *Nachbild* (reproduction), *Vorbild* (exemplar), *Gebilde* (structure), *Urbild* (original), *Abbild* (copy), and *Einbildungskraft* (imagination)."<sup>170</sup> About as close as we can get to this sort of wordplay in English is with "image" in "*imagination*," "form" in "*formation*" or, by extension, with the near homophone, "building."

Unlike the elitist's agenda or "narrow snobbery" of an aesthetics

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<sup>169</sup>The analogue in hermeneutics, as we saw in Chapter 1, is the hermeneutics of biblical exegesis. There are also parallels in the New Science of the seventeenth century with Bacon "reading" the book of nature in order to discover "the footsteps of the Creator imprinted on his creatures" (Anderson, 29), and in the aesthetics of typological symbolism, especially as described by Erich Auerbach in his *Mimesis*. We are also reminded here of our discussion in Chapter 1 of the "monstrous imagination" and the "exemplar-mediated prejudice."

<sup>170</sup>Joel Weinsheimer, *Gadamer's Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 68.

of *Bildung*,<sup>171</sup> the primary reason for Gadamer's emphasis on the concept lies in his attempt to introduce the ontological tradition, to explain its role in the working out of everyday experience, and to relate this project to the "human sciences."<sup>172</sup> To illustrate this we can turn to how Gadamer begins *Truth and Method*. Part One is entitled "The question of truth as it emerges in the experience of art." The first subsection deals with "transcending the aesthetic dimension" and describes the "significance of the humanist tradition for the human sciences." After a brief treatment of the "problem of method," Gadamer turns to four "guiding concepts of humanism": "*Bildung*," "*Sensus communis*," "Judgment," and "Taste." What these four concepts have in common and what makes them unique to the human sciences, Gadamer tells us, is "tact" (*Tactgefühl*).<sup>173</sup> He says that, "By 'tact' we understand a special sensitivity and sensitiveness to situations and how to behave in them, for which knowledge from general principles does not suffice. Hence an essential part of tact is that it is tacit and unformulable . . . . For the tact which functions in the human sciences is not simply a feeling and

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<sup>171</sup>This is Dewey's phrase, and for his strong comments on the "dualism" of educational values, of which "that between culture and utility is probably the most fundamental," see *Democracy and Education*, 229-30, 260-61, 288.

<sup>172</sup>To avoid confusion with this terminology, we need to remember that for Gadamer the "human sciences" are the *Geisteswissenschaften*, an "untranslatable" German term, that originated, ironically, as a translation of J. S. Mill's English term "moral sciences." The point for us is that we should not confuse Gadamer's "human sciences" with the American conception of the "social sciences."

<sup>173</sup>As Robert Hollinger pointed out to me, this is Wittgenstein's "knowing our way about." We can also think of it in terms of Michael Polanyi's "tacit knowing."

unconscious, but is at the same time a mode of knowing and a mode of being." Weinsheimer glosses this passage by pointing out that "Against those who maintain that tact is mere feeling without cognitive import, Gadamer argues that tact acquired through *Bildung* is a way of knowing; and against those who contend that tact is merely a means of knowledge (and therefore reducible to a procedure or method), Gadamer asserts that it is also a way of being." This "tact," we learn, "includes *Bildung*," and the nature of *Bildung* itself is characterized as "a universal and common sense" that keeps "oneself open to what is other -- to other, more universal points of view. It embraces a sense of proportion and distance in relation to itself, and hence consists in rising above itself to universality. To distance oneself from oneself and from one's private purposes means to look at these in the way that others see them." But this is not to say that the "universality" to which Gadamer alludes is a fixed concept or general rule to be applied to a particular situation. It is more like "a social or communal sense of the viewpoints of the possible others." Remember that "tact is not a natural capacity for feeling. It must be acquired and thus presupposes *Bildung*."<sup>174</sup>

It is in this context that we will approach the topic of *Bildung* in the light of *Women's Ways* as a mode of knowing and a mode of being. This, then, is at the heart of our earlier formulation that the educational experience (*Bildung*) is, in Dewey's phrase, "the continuous reconstruction" of the complementary reciprocation

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<sup>174</sup>See Gadamer, 16-17; Weinsheimer's *Gadamer*, 72; Gadamer, 17; Weinsheimer, 72.

between the ontology of philosophical hermeneutics (tact/understanding) and the epistemology of *Women's Ways* ("constructed knowledge"/experience). And here again we come up on the theme of "meeting," for in the etymological sense of "contact," we begin to hear and to get a common sense of the connected knowing and the belongingness that both *Women's Ways* and philosophical hermeneutics share with one another. The last third of this chapter will attempt to further clarify this. For now we need to turn briefly to the problem of how philosophical hermeneutics can be a complement to *Women's Ways*.

As was noted earlier, our understanding of *Women's Ways of Knowing* does not presuppose that a "counter culture" based upon the superiority of women supercede the dominant male culture.<sup>175</sup> Our position focuses on the complementarity of what *Women's Ways* calls "constructed knowledge" and what Gadamer refers to as "tact," the umbrella term that includes *Bildung*. Briefly, "constructed knowledge" is characterized by "passionate knowing . . . the elaborated form connected knowing takes after women use the self as an instrument of understanding." This means that this perspective begins "as an effort to reclaim the self by attempting to integrate knowledge that [women feel] intuitively [is] personally important with knowledge they had learned from others."<sup>176</sup> The self becomes

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<sup>175</sup>Alice Echols, "The Taming of the Id," in *Pleasure and Danger*, ed. Carole Vance (Boston: Routledge, 1984), 50. This essay provides a clear survey of the history of "cultural feminism."

<sup>176</sup>Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, Tarule, 141, 134.

the mediator of understanding because it becomes one with the object of knowing, unlike the objective distancing involved when, for example, in "procedural knowledge" knowing is directed away from the self and towards the object the knower seeks to understand, which is the process of rational analysis. Again, this is not to advocate a position that Carol Tavris seems to think is the primary concern of the cultural feminists, namely, that of "dethroning the universal male" in order to reverse the polarities of "us-them (women as the problem) thinking" to "them-us (men as the problem) thinking" based upon some idealized glorification of women's natural ways of being.<sup>177</sup> This is an oversimplification on her part and does not follow from what the authors of *Women's Ways* actually say about their research into women's epistemology. Our task in what follows is to point out areas of compatibility, not to argue an "either/or" case for an ethics of responsibility versus an ethics of rights grounded in some misguided belief in innate characteristics of gender. Gilligan herself cannot be read as explicitly taking this position, especially when, in her "Preface" to *In a Different Voice* she says, "The different voice I describe is characterized not by gender but by theme," a point that she further clarifies elsewhere.<sup>178</sup>

To begin, we need to put Belenky et al into context. *Women's Ways of Knowing* was published in 1986 and was the end result of a

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<sup>177</sup>Carol Tavris, *The Mismeasure of Woman* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 60.

<sup>178</sup>Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 2; and Linda Kerber et al., "On *In a Different Voice*," *Signs* 11 (1986): 324.

five-year project begun in the late 1970's. The authors of the study, all cognitive psychologists, include the following: Mary F. Belenky (U of Vermont), Blythe M. Clinchy (Wellesley), Nancy R. Goldberger (Fielding Institute, Santa Barbara), and Jill M. Tarule (Lesley College). The study is based on interviews with 135 women. Each interview session lasted approximately two to five hours and focused on relationships in families and schools rather than the workplace. There were 90 interviewees from 6 colleges and universities and 45 from family agencies. The project was conceived of as a continuation of the work begun by Harvard's William Perry in his all-male study, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years* (1970) and by Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice* (1982), which is her response to Lawrence Kohlberg's study of moral reasoning in boys and men, *The Philosophy of Moral Development* (1981), which derived from his 1958 University of Chicago dissertation, "The Development of Modes of Thinking and Choices in Years 10 to 16."<sup>179</sup>

With its collective 135 voices taken as the "different voice" of Woman, we might think of *Women's Ways of Knowing* as the cognitive psychologist's version of the *Bildungsroman*. As in that literary genre, Belenky et al, by retelling the life-change stories of women,

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<sup>179</sup>By comparing the titles of these works, one can begin to get a sense of what Gilligan means by a "different" voice. Note the formal, analytic character of the two male works and the less constrained approach taken by the women. But there is a curious twist to this observation that is even more revealing of the "voice" thesis: In conversation, Blythe Clinchy pointed out that *Women's Ways of Knowing* was not their choice for a title; rather, it was the editor's decision. The implication was that the *Women's Ways* "angle" would be a better marketing strategy. In this regard, one wonders if Gilligan's title is her own. This insight was brought to my attention by Professor Jane Kvetko.

describe the process of *Bildung* or "cognitive development" as reflected through "five different perspectives on knowledge that women seem to hold," but they "leave it to future work to determine whether these perspectives have any stagelike qualities."<sup>180</sup> The following is their summary of these positions:

Building on Perry's scheme, we grouped women's perspectives on knowing into five major epistemological categories: *silence*, a position in which women experience themselves as mindless and voiceless and subject to the whims of external authority; *received knowledge*, a perspective from which women conceive of themselves as capable of receiving, even reproducing, knowledge from the all-knowing external authorities but not capable of creating knowledge on their own; *subjective knowledge*, a perspective from which truth and knowledge are conceived of as personal, private, and subjectively known or intuited; *procedural knowledge*, a position in which women are invested in learning and applying objective procedures for obtaining and communicating knowledge; and *constructed knowledge*, a position in which women view all knowledge as contextual, experience themselves as creators of knowledge, and value both subjective and objective strategies for knowing.<sup>181</sup>

We need to note that two ways of "knowing" -- "separate knowing" and "connected knowing" -- coexist in the fourth position of "procedural knowledge," with connected knowing bridging procedural and constructed knowledge. Briefly, separate knowing is the dominant mode in modern society. It involves the search for and use of impersonal rules, techniques, and methods, and the knower is separated from the known. Its mode of discourse is argumentation, and, as an epistemology, Belenky/Clinchy/Goldberger/Tarule tell us that separate knowing can be compared to what Jerome Bruner calls the "paradigmatic mode," Peter Elbow refers to as the "doubting

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<sup>180</sup>Blythe Clinchy, "On Critical Thinking and Connected Knowing" *Liberal Education* 75 (Nov/Dec 1989): 14.

<sup>181</sup>Belenky et al., 15.

game," and Wilhelm Dilthey categorizes as the *Naturwissenschaften*.<sup>182</sup> Connected knowing, on the other hand, requires a knower to "get behind the other person's eyes and look at things from that person's point of view. . . . The connected knower believes that in order to understand what a person is saying one must adopt the person's own terms and refrain from judgment."<sup>183</sup> The authors compare this kind of knowing to Bruner's "narrative mode," Elbow's "believing game," and Dilthey's *Geisteswissenschaften*. And in contrast to the argumentation of separate knowing, the "voice" of connected knowing is narration. Instead of a voice that "evaluates," we are told, the connected knower "understands." But this is not to say that women in this regard are incapable of rational evaluation. Clinchy explains that "many women would rather think *with* someone rather than *against* someone. I [Clinchy] am arguing against an unnecessarily constricted view of thinking as analytic, detached, divorced from feeling."<sup>184</sup>

In terms of Gadamer's *Truth and Method*, if we visualize the five perspectives of *Women's Ways* as on a divided line,<sup>185</sup> the first three

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<sup>182</sup>Ibid., 113. The reference in *Women's Ways* is to Bruner's essay "Narrative and Paradigmatic Modes of Thought" in *Learning and Teaching the Ways of Knowing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); and to Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973). We have met Dilthey's writing in Chapter 1.

<sup>183</sup>Clinchy, 18.

<sup>184</sup>Ibid. For Hegel this is the opposition between reason (*vernunft*) and understanding (*verstehen*).

<sup>185</sup>Plato's image of the Divided Line (Book VI, 509c-511d in Allan Bloom's translation of *The Republic*) makes for a thought-provoking analogy. Note that in both examples the lines are divided into unequal segments. But the analogy should not suggest identity. In contradistinction to our thesis, for Plato, when someone learned a *techné*, it was understood that knowing *techné*



positions and part of the fourth ("separate knowing") would belong to a segment that we might call "method" or *techne* in Gadamer's sense of the "abuse of method" or "the use of method where it does not belong," i.e., the methods of social engineering imposed on humanistic concerns. We can also take Gadamer's critique of method to include the "White Male Club's"<sup>186</sup> abuse of power over others, specifically its racist and sexist requirements for "membership" which are based on a perverse rationalization of what constitutes a human being (or a subhuman being as the case may be).<sup>187</sup> The other side of the dividing line -- the remainder of position four ("connected knowing") and all of position five -- we might then call "truth" or *phronesis* or what Gadamer describes as "the 'scientific' integrity of acknowledging the commitment involved in all understanding . . . not what we do or what we ought to do, but what happens over and above our wanting and doing."<sup>188</sup>

This is the realm of "fact," of the "extrascientific experiences"

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also meant knowing the appropriate *phronesis*.

<sup>186</sup>Robert Terry, in his inquisitorial and apparently timeless article, "The White Male Club: Biology and Power," *Civil Rights Digest* (1974), 13-21, takes a critical view of the way people of color and white women are dominated by the power of white males in our society. He attempts to explain why there continues to be an inequitable distribution of power among the people in the United States and what needs to be done to remedy the situation. Lkening the country to a "white male club" committed to technical superiority and dominance of the world scene, he shows how the practice of the club arbitrarily gives privileges to club members (white males) exclusively, preventing those "others" who want to become members from doing so -- unless they conform to the white male model. Despite the fact that attacks on the club keep recurring, Terry maintains that the club has resisted change, leaving people of color and white women in subordinate positions. We will have more to say about the White Male Club later in the chapter.

<sup>187</sup>See Richard Rorty, "Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality," *The Yale Review* 81:4 (October 1993), 1-20.

<sup>188</sup>Gadamer, xxviii.

that Gadamer associates with the four "guiding concepts of humanism": "*Bildung*," "taste," "*sensus communis*," and "judgment." And this is also where Gadamer connects with *Women's Ways*, for these are the key concepts that best illustrate the impropriety of method, not only in the human sciences but also in the course of everyday human experience and interaction, as well as in the activity of "constructed knowing" (and "connected teaching"). What we mean by the impropriety of method is that since any given method is supposedly derived from a "universal" principle, the application of that method would be invariant regardless of the situation, which is to say, "tactless" and therefore inappropriate. For example, someone who is taught a second language from a series of outdated audiotapes and who has had no other contact with that language (as was and still is the case in many of the former communist bloc countries and China), the result would be mere parroting or an "uncultivated" use of the language. The language user would have no "sixth sense" of *how* to use the language at the right time in the right place. In other words, the parroting would be applied *techne* without concern for the practical judgment of *phronesis*. It would not require any sense of taste, common sense, or practical judgment for its application, which is to say that tact, because it is *not* a *techne*, cannot be taught. And as we saw in Chapter 2, if we take this example as a "microtext" for the whole of our modern technological culture, and specifically for modern educational practices, this is the situation that we must come

to terms with, for as we are all aware, "method" in this context can be synonymous with an abusive and methodical, negative prejudice. And this leads up to the point that we are trying to make in this chapter and in the dissertation itself: knowing how to use *techné* at the right time in the right place (or *phronesis*) can be understood as the complementarity of Gadamer's "tact" and *Women's Ways*' "constructed knowledge." Understood in this way, we arrive at our aim for education as the inculcation of tact through *Bildung* (through the hermeneutical forms of "connected teaching" and the "pedagogies of understanding and care") and a variation on our thesis: The educational experience is the continuous reconstruction of the complementary reciprocation of Gadamer's "tact" and the "constructed knowledge" of *Women's Ways of Knowing*.

To map out how *Women's Ways*' perspectives might be actualized, we can turn to Alice Walker's "womanist" *Bildungsroman*, *The Color Purple*, where the five "ways of knowing" seemingly unfold in what can be interpreted as sequential phases of development. We have to be careful, though, for, as we saw above, *Women's Ways* makes no claims for such stages of growth. The authors remind us that for some of the women that were interviewed, memories of having been in one or more of these positions were evident, but the authors do not press for any one position as presupposing or anticipating another. So why offer up a reading that suggests the existence of a dialectic from one perspective to the

next, culminating in "constructed knowing"? There are two reasons. First, this reading of *The Color Purple* is somewhat contrived so as to simply illustrate the full continuum of the five perspectives as well as their *potential* for "stagelike qualities." Another reading could very easily refute that Celie is, in fact, in any one of the stages that we propose for her throughout the novel. For example, at the end of the novel, one might argue that she is not constructing her own understanding at all but obviously is still working within a "procedural knowledge" perspective. The second reason for including this particular reading involves it as an illustration of the way in which *Women's Ways* is complemented by philosophical hermeneutics, specifically by the role of hermeneutical experience (*Erfahrung*) in the "unfolding" of these perspectives.

When we first meet Celie, she has been effectively silenced by the dominating and cruel males who control her life. She is illiterate, and when she speaks, it is a base and vulgar language. Mindless and voiceless, she is, by the measure of man, less than human. However, as she learns language, learns how to read, Celie begins her entry into human understanding in the form of "received knowledge," accepting what she is told as truth but at least more knowledgeable as to what she is accepting. But after she meets Shug, all of this changes. As we saw in one of the epigraphs to this chapter, through love and caring, Shug gets Celie to recognize the value of personal or "subjective knowledge." God, for example, "ain't a he or a she, but a It," an

indefinite pronoun that opens itself interpretively to Celie and allows her to search out and to intuit her own truths. Once Celie has done this and has taken responsibility for her own life, she begins to realize the necessity of "procedural knowledge," which results in her creating her own business as a seamstress and clothing designer. Finally, with the unraveling of the novel's plot, i.e., the revelation of true identities and the return of Celie's children, we have the sense of Celie now capable of constructing her own truths and of valuing "both subjective and objective strategies for knowing." The thematic sense at the novel's end is one of "homecoming," a metaphor for the return to a selfhood that has remained the same but has also become different. It has become, in effect, a home away from home. We will return to this aspect of our topic, to what Gadamer calls "the fundamental metaphoricity of language" and its implications for *Women's Ways* as a complement to philosophical hermeneutics, but first we must take a look at how Gadamer's philosophy of experience can be a complement to *Women's Ways*.

As we saw in Chapter 3, *Erfahrung*, the hermeneutical experience, is a fundamental aspect of philosophical hermeneutics.<sup>189</sup> It is "the experience of negation" and is quintessentially linked to the

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<sup>189</sup>In Chapter 3 we learned that *Erfahrung* "provides the basis in our actual lives for the specifically hermeneutic way we are related to other persons and to our cultural past, namely, dialogue and especially the dialogue of question and answer. This kind of 'experience' is not the residue of isolated moments, but an ongoing integrative process in which what we encounter widens our horizon, but only by overturning an existing perspective, which we can then perceive was erroneous or at least narrow. Its effect, therefore, is not simply to make us 'knowing,' to add to our stock of information, but to give us that implicit sense of broad perspectives, of the range of human life and culture, and of our own limits that constitutes a non-dogmatic wisdom. ("Translators Preface" to *TM*, xiii).

educational experience. Gadamer says that, "Only through negative instances do we acquire new experiences, as Bacon saw. Every experience worthy of the name thwarts an expectation. Thus the historical nature of man [sic] essentially implies a fundamental negativity that emerges in the relation between experience and insight." He goes on to make the connection between hermeneutical experience and the Aeschylean experience of "learning through suffering," explaining why this must be so: "What a man [sic] has to learn through suffering is not this or that particular thing, but insight into the limitations of humanity, into the absoluteness of the barrier that separates man from the divine . . . . Thus experience is experience of human finitude . . . . If it is characteristic of every phase of the process of experience that the experienced person acquires a new openness to new experiences, this is certainly true of being perfectly experienced. It does not mean that experience has ceased and a higher form of knowledge is reached (Hegel), but that for the first time experience fully and truly is. In it all dogmatism, which proceeds from the soaring desires of the human heart, reaches an absolute barrier."<sup>190</sup> In this light, our *Women's Ways*' reading of *The Color Purple* is also a reading of the novel as a formulation of the hermeneutical experience, the experience of negation. We might even say that the novel is one long string of negations for Celie. For example, Celie's learning to read and write is a negation of her

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<sup>190</sup>Gadamer, 365, 356-357.

"silence"; she realizes the suffering that she causes Sophie after Harpo, on Celie's advice, beats Sophie in order to keep her in her place; she discovers through Shug that being a woman can be more than she had ever imagined; Shug shows Celie how to "negate" God; Celie discovers that her sister had, in fact, been writing to her all along; and in the end, she discovers that the identities of parents and children were not what they appeared to be. Read in this way, we are not so much concerned with how one attains some "higher form of knowledge" or "constructed knowledge" as we are with the historicity of Being, what Dewey calls the "continuous reconstruction of experience," and Charles Taylor calls "situated freedom." It is this ontological framework that complements *Women's Ways*.

But in what specific ways are Gadamer and *Women's Ways* similar? Gadamer tells us that the hermeneutical experience requires the priority of hearing over sight, and in the previous two chapters we learned that Gadamer's philosophy is indeed founded on an ontological conception of understanding marked by its linguisticity and dialectical nature, i.e., speaking, listening, application, and the historical effecting of that interaction. In this regard we need only recall Gadamer's definition of hermeneutics as "the art of bringing what is said or written to speech again." To underscore the point, however, we can turn to Gadamer's metaphorical use of key words. In this case we find recurring in *Truth and Method* important variations

on the German verb *horen* or "listen to," from which our English word "hear" is derived, and one of the most significant variations is with the word for "belonging" (*gehoren*). As we are told by the translators of *Truth and Method*, "In many languages, 'to hear' and 'to obey' are the same word. When we genuinely listen to another's insight into whatever we are seriously discussing, Gadamer suggests, we discover some validity in it, something about the thing itself that would not have shown itself simply within our own limited horizon . . . .

Participants in a conversation 'belong' to and with each other, 'belong' to and with the subject of their discussion, and mutually participate in the process which brings out the nature of that subject." (In American slang, we have the expression "I hear you" as an all-purpose way of saying "I agree with you" or "I understand what you have said and I will respect or obey your wishes.") This "bringing out" process, as we have seen, is the event of hermeneutical understanding itself, and as we begin to realize early in our reading of *Truth and Method*, the embeddedness of "hearing" and "voice" and "belongingness" (or community) is not simply an etymological phenomenon but a metaphorical experience that reveals the ontological implications of the dialectic implied in "hearing" (*horen*) and the inseparability of hearing the voice of the Other or "belongingness" (*Zugehörigkeit*).<sup>191</sup>

On this point we can also turn to Rorty, who, like Gadamer and *Women's Ways*, has made his case for metaphor as a source of our

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<sup>191</sup> Gadamer, *Reason in the Age of Science*, 119; Gadamer, xvi, 463.



beliefs. Explaining that traditional philosophy has downgraded metaphor because it "endangered the conception of philosophy as a process culminating in vision," Rorty tells us that "such visual metaphors contrast with the auditory metaphors which Heidegger preferred . . . . The latter are better metaphors for metaphor, because they suggest that cognition is not always recognition, that the acquisition of truth is not always a matter of fitting data into a preestablished scheme. A metaphor is, so to speak, a voice from outside logical space, rather than an empirical filling-up of a portion of that space, or a logical-philosophical clarification of the structure of that space."<sup>192</sup>

Similarly, in *Women's Ways* we are told that "the tendency for women to ground their epistemological premises in metaphors suggesting speaking and listening is at odds with the visual metaphors (such as equating knowledge with illumination, knowing with seeing, and truth with light) that scientists and philosophers most often use to express their sense of mind." Further, we learn that Belenky et al "adopted the metaphor of voice and silence as our own. It has become the unifying theme that links the chapters in our story of women's ways of knowing and of the long journey they must make if they are to put the knower back into the known and claim the power of their own minds and voices." We also learn of the importance of "understanding" as "something akin to the German word *kennen*,

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<sup>192</sup>Rorty, *Philosophical Papers* vol. 2, 12-13. Here again we return to the thematic continuity of the Bildung/building trope.

implying personal acquaintance with an object [usually a person]" and that understanding is more prominent in "connected knowing" than in "separate knowing." "Understanding," we are told, "involves intimacy and equality between self and object, while *knowledge* . . . implies separation from the object and mastery over it."<sup>193</sup> Furthermore, this priority of understanding over knowledge -- as we have seen it unfold in both Gadamer and *Women's Ways* -- is further described by their respective applications of the "I-Thou" metaphor.<sup>194</sup>

But what of the objection to the comparison of these two views of understanding on the grounds that "understanding" is more like a psychological state of empathy for *Women's Ways*? It would be difficult to overlook *Women's Ways*' differentiation between "reception" and "projection" on this point. Drawing from the work of Nel Noddings, Belenky et al assert that unlike the traditional "phallic image" of empathy as projecting oneself into another in order to better understand, the image of "receiving the other" or of "feeling with the other" is more appropriate to the experience of women.<sup>195</sup> In our view, this is precisely what Gadamer has in mind when he tells us that "understanding begins when something addresses us."<sup>196</sup> And it is this mutual concern for the "thing-in-itself" (*Sache*) that guides the dialogue that allows the fusion of the "I" and "Thou" to take

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<sup>193</sup>Belenky, et al., 18, 19, 101.

<sup>194</sup>Gadamer, 358; Clinchy, 18.

<sup>195</sup>Belenky, et al., 122.

<sup>196</sup>Gadamer, 229.

place, which is to say that this reciprocal concern for the *Sache* generates the all-important dialogue, which, in turn, generates ontological understanding, the complementarity that philosophical hermeneutics gives to *Women's Ways*. This way of responding to the Other leads us to a final area of comparison, for what seems to further reciprocate these views of understanding is some fundamental acknowledgement of "care."

Unlike Gilligan, Noddings, and *Women's Ways*, Gadamer does not speak explicitly about "care."<sup>197</sup> However, as we have seen, his philosophical hermeneutics comes out of the work of Heidegger, who maintained that constitutive of Being is what he called *Sorge*. Translated as "care" or "concern," *Sorge* characterizes that ceaseless interaction of Being with everything that it comes into contact with and is something like the structure of the way Being inhabits the world. And there is a strong sense of this concern for Being in Gadamer's emphasis on the Other, "openness," and "belongingness." For instance, Gadamer sounds very much like an advocate of an ethics of care when he says that, "It is truly a tremendous task which faces every human every moment. His [sic] prejudices -- his being saturated with wishes, drives, hopes, and interests -- must be held under control to such an extent that the other is not made invisible or does not remain invisible. It is not easy to acknowledge that the other could be right, that oneself and one's

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<sup>197</sup> In a very difficult passage, Gadamer defends Heidegger's "existential of care" against "another specific ideal of existence" (Gadamer, 263).

own interests could be wrong . . . . We must learn to respect others and otherness."<sup>198</sup>

These implicit similarities between Gadamer's hermeneutical view of "care as concern for the Other" and *Women's Ways* view of "care as relational ethics" have, in fact, been found to be compatible in terms of interpersonal communication theory.<sup>199</sup> Recognizing that their work is coming out of the work of Gilligan and Gadamer (among others), Deetz and Stevenson bring to the surface an underlying affinity between these two views of care, a comparison that lends itself very well to our discussion. Briefly, their approach to understanding and care echoes one of our themes in the previous chapter, "participation." Here, the authors refer to a "participatory attitude," which "is based on the central interpersonal decision to *engage* with the other [and] this is not principally a decision as to whether or not you will interact, but whether you will talk *with* or *at* others." And sounding very much like Gadamer and the cultural feminists, Deetz and Stevenson point out that one of the essential traits of this attitude is "care," which denotes a "quality of appreciating things for what they are and being committed to their preservation and self-development . . . . To care is to have our senses open to experience, rather than to have them foreclosed by bias, prejudice, careless thinking and feeling, and a desire to have our own

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<sup>198</sup>Misgeld, 233. Note the connection here to the experience of negation (*Erfahrung*).

<sup>199</sup>See Stanley Deetz and Sheryl Stevenson, *Managing Interpersonal Communication* (New York: Harper and Row, 1986).

way. Carefulness involves being both tentative and committed -- a desire to delay judgments and a commitment to understand." Finally, to redouble what we have been saying all along, this "participatory attitude" is another example of the fusion of horizons. The *Women's Ways*' echo in Deetz and Stevenson that "being careful is working to stretch one's self to understand that which is other" can be understood in Gadamerian, ontological terms as an appeal to the "fundamental metaphoricity of language."<sup>200</sup> The implication is that if understanding is linguistic, if language is fundamentally metaphorical, and if "Being that can be understood is language," then Being is fundamentally metaphorical. This means that "Being" carefully open to the Other is to understanding what metaphor is to language, and this leads us to how *Women's Ways* complements philosophical hermeneutics and, again, how that complementarity reciprocates with a hermeneutical approach to feminist discourse.

In her essay, "Rhetoric in Postmodern Feminism: Put-Offs, Put-Ons, and Political Plays," Eloise Buker makes the point that "feminist postmodern writers offer some surprising metaphors for us to try on in order to construct political understandings." She is quick to point out, however, that before such construction can happen, *deconstruction* -- in the form of subverting "domination politics" or what Kathleen Jones calls "the hegemony of patriarchal gender relations" and Fox-Genovese refers to as "the stranglehold that . . .

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<sup>200</sup>Deetz and Stevenson, 22, 26. Gadamer asserts that "transference from one sphere to another has not only a logical function; rather, corresponding to it is the fundamental metaphoricity of language" (Silverman, 181).

men have maintained on human possibilities and prestige" -- must take place first.<sup>201</sup> But is philosophical hermeneutics up to the task of providing feminist social theory with an "empowering dialectic"? In and of itself, as the argument goes, probably not.<sup>202</sup> But the point of this chapter is that the radical or feminist hermeneutics required of Gadamer for subverting that stranglehold can be found in the complementary fusion of horizons that we have posited for *Women's Ways* with philosophical hermeneutics. If we think of this thesis as one of the "surprising metaphors for us to try on in order to construct political understandings," that is, if we think of *Women's Ways* as the tenor and Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics as the vehicle of a metaphor itself, then in this fusing we can indeed say that *Women's Ways'* epistemology is Gadamer's ontology, which is not to favor one of the subjects over the other. We must remember that in the metaphorical process of interaction not only does the vehicle filter the tenor, but the tenor modifies the vehicle as well,<sup>203</sup> and this is what we mean by the complementary reciprocation of Gadamer and *Women's Ways*. Not exactly the image of a cyborg, but when read

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<sup>201</sup>Buker, 230; Jones, 20; Fox-Genovese, 45.

<sup>202</sup>The "dialectic of empowerment" is from Eloise Buker's thought-provoking essay, "Feminist Theory and Hermeneutics: An Empowering Dialectic?" which in some important ways anticipates our thesis. Her thesis is "that feminism can become even more effective to the degree that it takes the insights of philosophical hermeneutics into consideration in organizing and articulating its account of social reality and its prospects for embodying a life that feminists can call Good." See Buker, "Feminist Theory and Hermeneutics," *Social Epistemology* 4, no.1 (1990): 23.

<sup>203</sup>The theories of metaphoricity get abstruse; however, the essays in the following provide a good overview: Sheldon Sacks' *On Metaphor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978) and Andrew Ortony's *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

as a metaphor for Being -- and since for Gadamer, Being is language and language is fundamentally metaphoric, then it is also a metaphor for metaphor itself -- it can be as "surprising" as its counterparts.

Although any one of the metaphors Buker cites would thematize the aim of this chapter, one in particular is especially "off-putting" and, thereby, particularly appropriate for the "border pedagogy" implicit in this discussion. Buker spotlights Donna Haraway who, writing in a "Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s" confesses that she would "rather be a cyborg than a goddess." By using the science fiction image of the being who is half-human/half-machine, Haraway claims that such imagery "can suggest a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves. This is not of a common language, but of a powerful infidel heteroglossia. It is an imagination of a feminist speaking in tongues to strike fear into the circuits of the super savers of the New Right." According to Buker, "These passages go beyond reminding us that our identities are a result of the social construction of a political order. They point out that the language and cultural practices of our societies constrain the choices that serve as the basis for that construction to work; they move toward deconstructing the distinctions that undergird those constraints."<sup>204</sup>

As a plausible counter to the lament that "contemporary

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<sup>204</sup>Buker, "Rhetoric in Postmodern Feminism," in *The Interpretive Turn*, eds. D.R. Hiley, et al. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 230-231. Haraway's essay is included in Nicholson, *Feminism/Postmodernism*.

feminism has failed to develop a persuasive rhetoric," Buker's sketch of what such a rhetoric might be like (which is further developed by the essays included in Linda Nicholson's *Feminism/Postmodernism*) also provides ancillary backup for the hopes and insights of education advocates like Elaine Atkins, who believes that the hermeneutic tradition "can provide curriculum theorists with a powerful tool for reshaping education thought and practice," for Shaun Gallagher whose "hypothesis" in *Hermeneutics and Education* is that "educational experience is always hermeneutical experience," for Susan Hekman who observes that "Gilligan has accomplished in moral theory what Gadamer accomplished in epistemology," and for Karen Warren who, working within a model developed by Wellesley's Peggy McIntosh, hopes for a "rewriting of the future of curricula" that will challenge "the Malestream Curriculum" and ultimately jump the "phase gap" to create a "redefined" curriculum that "includes us all."<sup>205</sup> Our hope in this chapter is to follow up on these and other leads that support the hunch that feminist theory can find a different *voice* in philosophical hermeneutics and that Gadamer's hermeneutics can find what Derrida refers to as a home-away-from-home<sup>206</sup> in cultural feminism.

If we return to the Divided line that we proposed earlier, the latter area of the *Women's Ways* model can be viewed as analogous to Gadamer's concept of "tact" as a "microtext" for the

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<sup>205</sup>Fox-Genovese, 53; Atkins, 437; Hekman, *Gender and Knowledge*, 57; and Warren, 49.

<sup>206</sup>The idea is from Derrida's "White Mythology" where he says that the figure of the borrowed home signifies metaphor itself. See Weinsheimer (1991, 185) for a discussion of this in relation to Gadamer.



interrelationship of hermeneutical understanding and experience (*Erfahrung*). Tact, as we have seen, presupposes *Bildung* (a kind of forestructure that as we saw earlier is the precondition for hermeneutical understanding) and which is, to roughly paraphrase Heidegger (and by implication Gadamer), the primordial knowledge that is Being itself. (We might paraphrase Shug here and say that "*Being* ain't a He or a She, but a It.")<sup>207</sup> And as we know from Gadamer, this Being that can be understood is language.

Understanding, in other words, is the mode of Being, and since understanding is possible only through language, and tact presupposes language, Being presupposes tact, which, in turn, presupposes *Bildung* and the hermeneutical experience of negation. Thus, the question for *Bildung* becomes, "What are the necessary conditions for understanding to take place?" or "How do we remove the blockages, obstructions, and resistance from Being's way?" Gadamer and *Women's Ways* respond with nearly the same answer: "voice." Both figuratively and literally, "voice" becomes the necessary vehicle for the shaping of understanding, which, in turn, becomes the mediator of a community bonded by what *Women's Ways* and the Heideggerian tradition refer to as "care." We might even go so far as to say that what *Bildung* is to tact in Gadamer's philosophy, voice is to understanding in the epistemology of *Women's Ways*. And again, we

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<sup>207</sup> However, there is a problem in this regard because, as Derrida has demonstrated in his critique of Heidegger, the reduction of Being to a unity (an "It") nullifies the possibility of gender critique. Perhaps a better example here is Haraway's androgenous cyborg metaphor.

arrive at our formulation that the educational experience is the complementary reciprocation between the ontology of philosophical hermeneutics and the epistemology of *Women's Ways*.

To illustrate this connection between the metaphoricity of ontology and care, we can begin with a "building"<sup>208</sup> as a near homophone of *Bildung*, and this building will be the structure that will house Robert Terry's "White Male Club." Think of it as the White Male Club *house*. Let us further imagine that, like *Bildung*, this structure is differentiated by its style, and that its style is eighteenth-century neoclassical, similar to the majority of federal buildings and monuments in Washington, D.C., e.g., the White House, the Supreme Court, and the National Archives. (Or on a parallel track, we can imagine the building as the archetype of the typical twentieth-century American school building, with its internal and external, regimented, rectangular shapes.) Given this rectangular, "closed" shape of the community, the "tactfulness" (judgment, taste, common sense) of the Club's members will be contingent upon their being able to apply "the right angle" to situations they encounter in their day-to-day praxis. For students it will be how well they can seek out "the right answer" and mechanically reproduce it for the teacher.<sup>209</sup> Similarly, as we have seen with Gadamer, tact presupposes *Bildung*. If *Bildung* is restrictive, tact will recapitulate that understanding.

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<sup>208</sup>See Heidegger's "Building Dwelling Thinking" in David F. Krell ed., *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), pp. 323-339.

<sup>209</sup>*Women's Ways* describes this as "received knowledge."

Thus the problem that confronts us is how to construct, in *Women's Ways'* jargon, not only the building but how to get the Club to understand itself in what Gadamer calls<sup>210</sup> the "thoughtful mediation with contemporary life."

Our next step, then, for the building of our White Male Club *house* is to come up with what Ricoeur calls the "architecture of themes and purposes."<sup>211</sup> We can do this by turning to Gadamer's assertion of the fundamental metaphoricity of language. As Weinsheimer puts it, "If it is the case that the metaphoricity of language makes understanding itself possible, the resultant interpretation will be metaphorical whether it contains any metaphors or not."<sup>212</sup> These metaphorical correspondences begin to "unconceal" themselves, for example, when we consider the propriety here of Heidegger's description of language as the "*house* of Being," that "linguistic turn" which holds that language is not a mere form of expression but an appearance of Being itself. Similarly we are reminded of the relevance, indeed the *importance* of language and voice to feminist theory -- from the critiques of "the virtue of silence," to Gilligan's "different voice," to Lakoff's *Language and*

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<sup>210</sup>Gadamer, 169.

<sup>211</sup>The quote is from Ricoeur's essay "Metaphor and the Problem of Hermeneutics," in J. Thompson, ed., *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 175. The context in which he makes this remark is relevant to what we are after in terms of metaphoricity and "shape": "As a totality, the literary work cannot be reduced to a sequence of sentences which are individually intelligible; rather, it is an architecture of themes and purposes which can be constructed in several ways. The relation of part to whole is ineluctably circular."

<sup>212</sup>Weinsheimer, "Gadamer's Metaphorical Hermeneutics," 191.

*Woman's Place*, to the argument made by *Women's Ways* in favor of an aural metaphor over the traditional male-oriented visual tropes -- as more relevant to the experience of women. A *propos* here is Timothy Crusius' comment that "philosophical hermeneutics tends to think of truth more as something we 'listen for' rather than 'look at.'" His allusion is to Gadamer's definition of philosophical hermeneutics as "the art of bringing what is said or written to speech again." We are reminded as well of the point made earlier by Donna Haraway's cyborg example of the need for a feminist rhetoric, for a "voice of authority" that will allow women to "become insiders and acquire an insider's voice of authority while questioning insider values."<sup>213</sup> The point to be made here takes the White Male Club *house* as a house made out of language, and if that house is to be reconstructed then the means by which reconstruction will succeed must be through the cooperative efforts of a language community or "community of conversation." It would be an answer to Toni Morrison's recent question, "How can we convert a racist house into a race-specific, non-racist home"?<sup>214</sup>

One way of visualizing that reconstructed building or house recalls the image of Jane Addams' Hull House and John Dewey's Laboratory School of the University of Chicago (1896-1904). As Maxine Greene reminds us, "Jane Addams moved from the language of Christian (and female) virtue to a language of social activism as

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<sup>213</sup>Crusius, 33; Gadamer, 119; Aisenberg and Harrington, 78.

<sup>214</sup>Karen Winkler, "The Significance of Race" *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 40 (May 11, 1994), A10.

she provided space and schooling to immigrant women, helped them form clubs and labor organizations, tried even to 'humanize' labor by seeking to instill greater understanding of the workers' world and more sensitivity to what it meant to be members of a collectivity."<sup>215</sup>

Likewise we see in the Dewey School another example of the reconstructed house of our exemplum. Katherine Camp Mayhew and Anna Camp Edwards tell us how the thirteen-year olds, in response to "many developing angles of interest," decided to organize a "Dewey Club for discussion and debate, [but] there was no spot which they could call their own, where their meetings could be free from interruption and under their own control." Acting on the problem of being "sadly put to it for quarters, [and] out of the actual, pressing, and felt need of the children, the idea of the club-house was born -- an actual house planned, built, and furnished by themselves."<sup>216</sup> But our intention here is neither to agree with Wilma Miranda's interpretation of Dewey's thought as "a sophisticated theoretical feminism," nor to agree with Susan Laird who questions the transparency of the Dewey canon and focuses instead on its potential masking of the contributions made by *The Dewey School* women. What is to be emphasized here is the metaphor as microtext, that this clubhouse-building project was coeducational, both male and female students

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<sup>215</sup>Maxine Greene, *The Dialectic of Freedom* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1978), 73.

<sup>216</sup>Mayhew and Edwards, 228-229.

collaborating to remedy a situation that threatened the growth of their language community. We might sum all of this up by again turning to Maxine Greene's *Dialectic of Freedom* (a book that began as The John Dewey Lecture at Teacher's College, Columbia University).

Referring to her own experience as the "quest" of "a woman striving to affirm the feminine as wife, mother, and friend, while reaching, always reaching, beyond the limits imposed by the obligations of a woman's life," it has also been the quest of "a person struggling to connect the undertaking of education . . . to the making and remaking of a public space, a space of dialogue and possibility . . . . The aim is to find (or create) an authentic public space, that is, one in which diverse human beings can appear before one another as, to quote Hannah Arendt, 'the best they know how to be.' Such a space requires the provision of opportunities for the articulation of multiple perspectives in multiple idioms, out of which something common can be brought into being."<sup>217</sup>

Weinsheimer takes this concept of metaphoricity and *Bildung* one step farther. "Gadamer's thesis," he contends, "is that *Bildung*, not method, best explains the nature of hermeneutic understanding." In fact, as Weinsheimer reads Gadamer, "*Bildung* also displays the structure of metaphor and that there is therefore a real sense in which we can say understanding is itself fundamentally metaphorical . . . . In the structure of excursion and reunion defining *Bildung* we see at

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<sup>217</sup>Greene, xi.

once the circular structure of hermeneutic understanding and metaphor." Moments of *Bildung* occur when the interpreter "is altered not so much by acquiring a new piece of information as a new horizon. He [sic] learns to understand differently -- most important to understand himself differently -- and through that very alteration in self-understanding he becomes himself more fully . . . a reciprocal transference like that which characterizes interactive metaphor." Weinsheimer concludes his essay by referring the seeming paradox of this dialectic to Gadamer's "fusion of horizons": "If we think of understanding as the establishment of a metaphorical relation, it fuses two horizons in such a way that they are both the same and different. Without mere contradiction, the hermeneutic *as* joins at one time both *is* and *is not*, and 'in this *as*,' Gadamer writes, 'lies the whole riddle.'"<sup>218</sup>

But given the ontological ambiguity of language, the paralogical situation of Gadamer's *as*, how are we ever to make decisions grounded in some normative criteria? How are we ever to know what is distortive, miseducative, or discriminatory? The answer, according to Gadamer, is to be found in the concept of *phronesis* rather than the concept of *techne*. As Gallagher explains it, "prescriptives (canons, rules, and so forth), and even normative assumptions within the meta-interpretation, should be developed, as far as possible, at the local level on the basis of the local hermeneutical situation, not on the basis of a universal prescriptive hermeneutics . . . . A local inquiry (the

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<sup>218</sup>Weinsheimer, 187, 199-200, 201.

development of a meta-interpretation and prescribed interpretations) would be guided by the following kinds of questions: In any particular interpretational site, existing historically and in a specific place, what are the most immediate, the most local power relations at work? How do they produce and constrain the existing interpretations, and conversely, how are the existing interpretations used to support or transform such power relations?"<sup>219</sup> In other words, because the ruling epistemology has been *techne* with its attendant universal prescriptions, codes, and methodologies, our not being able to see the forest for the trees has perpetuated an insularity that disallows a full hermeneutical openness to the unfamiliar and enforces the "silence" of women. Ironically, it is the stunting of this very *Bildung*, Deweyan growth, or "historically effected consciousness" that, in the end, will contribute to the full disclosure of our being-in-the-world. We may as well try to prevent a metaphor from happening.

By way of conclusion, a passage from Georgia Warnke's book on Gadamer seems most appropriate. It is a passage that communicates some further credibility to what I have only hinted at in the above discussion, the plausibility of an educational experience based upon the complementarity of feminist social theory and philosophical hermeneutics:

To the extent individuals and cultures integrate this understanding of others and of the differences between them within their own self-understanding, to the extent, in other words, that they learn from others and take a wider,

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<sup>219</sup>Gallagher, 333. Gallagher credits these insights to Paulo Freire's philosophy of education. Similarly, we find that in their chapter on "Connected Teaching" Belenky et al do the same.



more differentiated view, they can acquire sensitivity, subtlety and a capacity for discrimination. These virtues do not indicate that a *gebildete* culture has appropriated a certain set of beliefs that it finds more defensible than certain others. In becoming cultured we do not simply acquire better norms, values etc. We also acquire the ability to acquire them. In other words we learn tact, taste and judgment. Perhaps we cannot codify what we have learned as a method for adjudicating between beliefs; none the less, through the historical experience and conversation with others that are part of our self-formation or *Bildung* we can learn to think. And this practical reason thus substitutes for the dogmatism of the Enlightenment.<sup>220</sup>

Now that we have circumnavigated the hermeneutical circle and have visited the topical regions of "understanding," "experience," and *Bildung*, we find ourselves in something like the situation that T.S. Eliot describes in "Little Gidding," where he tells us that "the end of our exploring/Will be to arrive where we started/And know the place for the first time."<sup>221</sup> We have seen, for example, that the educational experience can be essentially hermeneutical, and as a hermeneutical experience it is ontologically in contradistinction to modern educational theory. That is, it goes against the grain of modern education's elevation of *techne* to the status of paradigm. But what is most distressing about this reversal of paradigmatic priorities is that this hegemonic "abuse of method" continues to reinforce the trait genderizations which have fueled the sexism machine for centuries. What we have seen, in fact, is that the educational experience is not the patriarchal mechanization of human judgment but the continuous reconstruction of the complementary

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<sup>220</sup>Warnke, 174.

<sup>221</sup>T.S. Eliot, *The Complete Poems and Plays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1971), 145.

reciprocation between philosophical hermeneutics and *Women's Ways*. We have also seen that this hermeneutically-conceived educational experience is immanent in certain "pedagogies of understanding" which can be circumscribed by Gadamer's hermeneutical understanding, that Deweyan experience comports with hermeneutical experience, and that *Bildung* can be a way to connect feminist social theory to hermeneutics. Now, in good hermeneutical form, we are back to our beginning and the meeting of *Frankenstein* and *Emile*, but, having come full circle, our "meeting of this meeting" is *as if* for the first time.

As if we would be enacting the process of metaphoricity itself, the foreconceptions that we now bring to the process of this "meeting" create a newness "over and above our wanting and doing." What we will be seeing in the next two chapters, which form essentially Part 2 of the dissertation, is a spiraling out of that newness in terms of the correspondence between theory and practice. That is, the next chapter, Chapter 5, as a "microtext" of the whole thesis, applies the "theory" of Part 1 to the metaphorical context of a "meeting" between *Frankenstein* and *Emile*, but at the same time this metaphorical application is also the "theoretical" side of *its* follow up chapter on classroom practice. However, this second part of the thesis is more than simply an illustrative exercise. It addresses, as Gadamer says, "the problem of *application*, which is to be found in all understanding."<sup>222</sup> It is the metaphorical (or theoretical) and the

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<sup>222</sup>Gadamer, 307.

practical application of the three chapters in Part 1.

So in each of the foregoing three chapters, one might say that we were "testing" or "projecting" the viability of the hermeneutics/ education thesis, that is, anticipating a "completeness" or whole, by thinking through how well each part, each of the three elements -- "understanding," "experience," and "*Bildung*" -- can be applied to the whole and how well the whole can be thought of as greater than the sum of its parts. We might think of this as a "testing" of the "transferability" of each concept, or something like the process of making the right connections as one would attempt to do in navigating the Paris Metro system where *correspondance* literally denotes "direction to" and is what we would call a "transfer" from one line to another without having to buy another ticket. Essentially, we are attempting to answer the question, "To what extent can each element be applicative in a believably 'right' way?" Both theoretically and practically. And when this "applicative right way" rings true, as in the process of metaphoricity itself, understanding "unconceals" itself, and this is the same phenomenon that we experience in a well-wrought metaphor. Something familiar fuses with something typically unfamiliar in such a way that a new "being," so to speak, comes into existence. This new "being" is the temporal event of ontological understanding, that will, in turn, project *itself* by questioning the interlocutor in yet a different way and in a different voice. What we hope to accomplish in Part 2, then, is a bringing to term of this

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dialectic of question and answer, and in the hermeneutical logic of that dialectic, to find the question to which the meeting of *Frankenstein* and *Emile* is the answer. That question for Chapter 5 will be something along the lines of, "What would it mean if the educational experience were fundamentally metaphorical"? And for Chapter 6, the question turns on something like, "What would it mean if the educational experience were essentially hermeneutical?" Where these two questions meet will be ontological understanding as the educational experience.

## CHAPTER 5

*FRANKENSTEIN MEETS EMILE*

I am sick of hearing of the sublimity of Milton, the  
elegance of Pope, and the original, untaught genius of  
Shakespeare.

-- Mary Wollstonecraft,  
*Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*

But man, proud man,  
Dressed in a little brief authority,  
Most ignorant of what he's most assured,  
His glassy essence, like an angry ape,  
Plays such fantastic tricks before high Heaven  
As make the angels weep -- who, with our spleens,  
Would all themselves laugh mortal.  
-- Isabella in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*

And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones, and flesh  
of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she  
was taken out of man. -- *Genesis 2:22*

Would metaphor be the continuous celebration of identification?  
-- Julia Kristeva, *Tales of Love*

Tempting as it might be to read Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* as a Bloomian (Harold) misreading of Rousseau's *Emile*, our purpose in this chapter is neither to map an "anxiety of influence" nor to play detective as one of those "carrion-eaters of scholarship" that Bloom identifies with "the source hunters."<sup>223</sup> Nor are we attempting to

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<sup>223</sup>The "misreading" reference is to Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 80, where he spells out his theory of poetry as an "intra-poetic relationship" wherein strong poets make poetic history by "misreading one another, so as to clear imaginative space for themselves" (5). What might be even more tempting in this regard is to follow up on Jane Roland Martin's thesis that Rousseau's *Emile* is derivative of Plato's *Republic*. See her *Reclaiming a Conversation: The Ideal of the Educated Woman* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), especially Chapters 2 and 3. Her reading of Sophie's

crack any code in order to discover the "real" meaning inherent in each work.<sup>224</sup> What we *will* be attempting is a reading of these two texts as a metaphor for our thesis that the educational experience is the continuous reconstruction of the complementary reciprocation between the ontology of philosophical hermeneutics and the epistemology of *Women's Ways of Knowing*.<sup>225</sup> It is, in effect, an exemplum for the previous three chapters. This is to say that the "meeting" or "fusion of horizons" of *Emile* and *Frankenstein* demonstrates 1) as a metaphor for Part 1, the hermeneutical interactivity of "understanding," "experience," and "*Bildung*"; 2) the fundamental metaphoricity immanent in the structure of *Bildung* and,

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"place" in *Emile* strengthens our later discussion in this chapter. Aside from theories of "misreadings," however, there are several treatments of the literary connections between *Emile* and *Frankenstein*. See Paul Cantor, *Creature and Creator* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); David Marshall, *The Surprising Effects of Sympathy* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988); James O'Rourke, "Nothing More Unnatural": Mary Shelley's Revision of Rousseau," *English Literary History* 56 (Fall 1989): 543-569; and Alan Richardson, "From *Emile* to *Frankenstein*: The Education of Monsters," *European Romantic Review* 1:2 (Winter 1991): 147-157. Bloom uses the "carrion-eaters" phrase in *A Map of Misreading* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 17-18. The context is a discussion of poetic origins: ". . . poets, as poets, and particularly the strongest poets, return to origins at the end, or whenever they sense the immanence of the end. Critics may be wary of origins, or consign them disdainfully to those carrion-eaters of scholarship, the source hunters, but the poet-in-a-poet is as desperately obsessed with poetic origins, generally despite himself, as the person-in-a-person at last becomes obsessed with personal origins." Note the connections here with our earlier discussion of monstrosity (Chapter 1), *Frankenstein's* monster's anguished query into its (in)human origins, and the point that Bloom makes elsewhere about the anxiety of influence: "Conceptually the central problem for the latecomer [poet] necessarily is *repetition*, for repetition dialectically raised to re-creation is the ephebe's road of excess, leading away from the horror of finding himself to be only a copy or a replica" (*The Anxiety of Influence*, 80).

<sup>224</sup>The scholarship given over to explications of each work is voluminous, and since we are not primarily concerned with these works *qua* works, I will simply mention a "reservoir" for each. For *Emile*, see David Owen, *Education and Freedom in Rousseau's Emile* (Ph.D. diss.: University of Chicago, 1984). For *Frankenstein*, see George Levine and U.C. Knoepfelmacher, *The Endurance of Frankenstein* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); and William Veeder, *Mary Shelley and Frankenstein: The Fate of Androgeny* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

<sup>225</sup>Mary F. Belenky et al, *Women's Ways of Knowing* (New York: Basic Books, 1986). Hereafter referred to in the text as *Women's Ways*.

by extension, hermeneutical "understanding" and "experience"; and 3) the metaphorical possibility for a "two-sex society" where "theories of male and female education are mutually illuminating . . . [where] educational theory and philosophy . . . place males and females in one world -- a world in which the sexes live together independently."<sup>226</sup> But this "meeting" will not be "arranged" so that it follows a critical or textual approach to the works themselves. What "method" there is follows from Richard Rorty's point that a text is not *about* something but should be used *for* something. Or in his words, "the distinction is between getting it right and making it useful." He expands this view by saying that, "Such criticism uses the author or text not as a specimen reiterating a type but as an occasion for changing a previously accepted taxonomy, or for putting a new twist on a previously told story."<sup>227</sup> Generally, the "new twist" that will be the task of this chapter to set in motion will have a lot to do with how we think about the educational experience and very little to do with what "Daniel Dennet calls 'a cure for the common code.'"<sup>228</sup>

Figuratively, that "twist" might be better described as the

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<sup>226</sup> Martin, 183. See n. 223 for full citation.

<sup>227</sup> The citations are from Stephan Collini, ed., *Interpretation and Overinterpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 108. It might be helpful to include here the sentence that precedes the latter quote: "Unmethodical criticism of the sort which one occasionally wants to call 'inspired' is the result of an encounter with an author, character, plot, stanza, line or archaic torso which has made a difference to the critic's conception of who she is, what she is good for, what she wants to do with herself: an encounter which has rearranged her priorities and purposes." Again we come back to the thematic undercurrent of the thesis: "meeting."

<sup>228</sup> Cited by Rorty in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, 98. See n. 227 for full citation.

verbal counterpart to the "shift" that happens in the optical illusion of the "transparent" Necker cube that seemingly "moves" after we stare at it for a brief period of time.<sup>229</sup> In terms of the meeting of our two texts, that "shift" translates into a "crisscrossing" of voice and persona in which we hear a "female" voice in the male persona of Emile and a male voice in the "female" persona of Victor Frankenstein's monster,<sup>230</sup> and this androgeny can be read as a metaphor for Jane Roland Martin's hope for a "two-sex society" where "theories of male and female education are mutually illuminating." Making sense of this oscillating male/female interdependence, then, realized in terms of the metaphorical purpose and direction that we described above, will be the purpose of this chapter. To this end, first, we will weave into the chapter the allegorical as well as the

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<sup>229</sup>In his essay "Metaphor and Learning" Hugh Petrie explains that "on some occasions we learn by actually changing the contexts of understanding. This latter phenomenon is graphically illustrated by the so-called ambiguous figures. [Take for example the figure that] can be seen as either a duck or a rabbit. Piaget notes the distinction between these two kinds of learning by distinguishing between assimilation and accommodation. During assimilation, we learn by changing experience to fit our concepts and modes of understanding. During accommodation, we learn by changing our concepts and modes of understanding to fit our experience." See Andrew Ortony, ed., *Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 440. Petrie goes on to connect this kind of "shift" to what Thomas Kuhn describes as happening during scientific revolutions.

<sup>230</sup>"Voice," as I will be using it, is the "voice of tradition" that "speaks" through each character. The emphasis here is on the historicity, linguisticity, and dialectic of tradition as Gadamer's "historically effected consciousness." I define "persona" as "appearance-complex" or the natural givenness of one's biological gender or race. This is a slight twist on the Jungian definition of "persona" as "function-complex," which denotes the projection of one's "psychological" appearance, i.e., personality. Again, as another "microtext" or part-for-the-whole of our thesis, we can think of "voice" as the analogue of philosophical hermeneutics and "persona" as the analogue of *Women's Ways*. Notice that the inverse relationship or "crisscrossing" is evident even with this terminology. We would typically associate "voice" with *Women's Ways* and "persona" with the complexities of a hermeneutical ontology. But this is the very "complementary reciprocation" of our thesis: the "biologicality" is missing in philosophical hermeneutics, and the ontological basis of understanding as being is missing in *Women's Ways*.



historical and thematic affinities of both texts; and secondly, we will compare the two works in terms of how that "voice over" of the two characters can be understood as a metaphor for the educational experience as we have been conceiving of it. In the course of this discussion, the point that we will try to establish is that the "voice-over metaphor" ultimately describes what might be thought of as an "ideal type" of the educational experience that Jane Roland Martin proposes, but at the same time, at its most promising juncture, that ideal fails to achieve the vision that it embodies, thus, like Victor Frankenstein, it creates an anomaly that either can be understood in a "new" way or rejected outright based solely on its "otherness." And it is in this "experience of negation," i.e., the hermeneutical experience of this "dialectical metaphor," that we find the new twist for our theory of education.<sup>231</sup>

Given this twist, then, we can briefly formulate that theory by saying that the educational experience is, essentially, hermeneutical. The implication here is that since philosophical hermeneutics holds

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<sup>231</sup> As we saw in Chapter 3, the phrase "experience of negation" comes from Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 354, where Gadamer tells us that the hermeneutical experience (*Erfahrung*) "is initially always experience of negation: something is not what we supposed it to be." (Hereafter, unless otherwise stated, all quotes from Gadamer will be from this text and will be abbreviated in notation as *TM*.) The phrase "dialectical metaphor" is from Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Idea of the Good in Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy*, trans. P. Christopher Smith (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), 70-71. There Gadamer calls Plato's *Republic* "one grand dialectical myth." He goes on to say that "surely one must take all the institutions and structures in this model city as dialectical metaphors. Of course reading dialectically means relating these utopian demands in each instance to their opposite, in order to find, somewhere in between, what is really meant -- that is, in order to recognize what the circumstances are, and how they could be made better." Gadamer's theory of metaphor, with its variations on our theme of "meeting" and in its ontological concerns for "emancipatory reflection," is compatible with our overall approach to the thesis.

that there is a fundamental metaphoricity for language, we can infer a fundamental metaphoricity for the educational experience. This metaphoricity, in turn, can be identified with the hermeneutical principle of "openness" implicit in the process of "the continuous reconstruction of experience," which is the assimilative/ accommodative process of learning itself.<sup>232</sup> What we arrive at, then, is a hermeneutical understanding of "learning" as being one with the experience of irony that defines the experience of negation, hence the connection to metaphoricity and to *Bildung*. In other words, when something is not what we have presupposed it to be or expected it to be, we can either be open to "new" ways of understanding the unexpected event or anomaly as an interpretation, redescription, or metaphor of what we "originally" thought it to be and thus "learn" from the "new" application that has presented itself to our own self-understanding (Emile),<sup>233</sup> or we can "escape from freedom"<sup>234</sup> by "learning" that the consequences of irony will be someone else's concern (Frankenstein).<sup>235</sup> In contrast to the miseducative or

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<sup>232</sup>This is similar to Gallagher's thesis that "the hermeneutical process is better characterized as a process of learning rather than reading." (See *Hermeneutics and Education*, 330.)

<sup>233</sup>Compare this to Dewey's "growth," "continuous reconstruction of experience," and educative/miseducative experiences, and *Women's Ways*' "constructed knowledge." What we are describing here as the process of being able "to learn from the new application that has presented itself" is *phronesis* or practical judgment; it is not a *techné* into which one can be trained. This has been the recurrent theme of the thesis itself.

<sup>234</sup>We take up this discussion of Erich Fromm's "escape" in the next chapter. (See Chapter 6, n. 2.)

<sup>235</sup>cf., Heidegger's "forgetfulness of Being." Allan Megill talks briefly about this idea in his *Prophets of Extremity*, 127-128. I am reminded, too, of a comment made recently on NBC's "Nightly News" by the director of Blacksburg, Virginia's Networking Project. The comment, "For better or for worse, it's coming" was made in the context of a report on the "information superhighway."

invalidative nature of the latter experience, we can call the former experience of "figuring out"<sup>236</sup> a "validity trope" in that when it "works," i.e. when it is effected through what Gadamer calls "tradition" or "the horizon of the question" (or what we are calling "the continuous process of reconstructing experience" or metaphoricity), it emerges or applies itself to self-understanding as if through some kind of "recursive preceptivity," which implies neither idealism nor historicism; it is neither a process analogous to the perennially recurring "Great Ideas" of the traditional patriarchal core curriculum, nor is it the most banal misinterpretation of "progressive education" as so much "non-directive nonsense."<sup>237</sup> These "tropes" or "corrective metaphors" as learning experiences are validated only in their application, which is always understanding itself.<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>236</sup>The connection here is to Gadamer's concept of "understanding." See M. B. and L. Watson-Franke's "Understanding in Anthropology: A Philosophical Reminder," *Current Anthropology* 16, no. 2 (June 1975): 247-262, where they point out that, "In English the expression 'to figure out' seems best suited to bringing out this meaning of understanding [the mastery of skills as well as the conduct of intellectual operations]. One can 'figure out' the meaning of a text or the way to assemble a machine. The term itself tells us what is happening: we attempt to bring the figure (*Figur, Gestalt*) out of the context in which it has been hidden from us. We look for its form, and we could go so far as to say that we are looking for its formula. We reflect upon our activity, and the relationship we are thus building up between the phenomenon (the text, the machine) and ourselves finds expression in the questions we ask about this process. The fact that such reflection has come almost to a standstill in the modern process of production does not say so much about our understanding of machines as about our understanding of our working situation where mechanical operations have superceded the reflective, creative process" (258). This observation about anthropological practices, it seems to me, describes perfectly well the problem that we are facing in modern education, the problem with which this thesis is concerned.

<sup>237</sup>The quote "nondirective nonsense" is from Richard Rorty, "Education, Socialization, and Individuation," *Liberal Education* 75:4 (Sept/Oct 1989), 7, where he is describing the "standard caricature of Dewey's views." The point that I am reinforcing is our basic agreement with Dewey's frustration with Either/Or thinking.

<sup>238</sup>This explanation is, in fact, an example of that very process of application and understanding, i.e. a metaphor for philosophical hermeneutics itself. For example, as we recall from Chapter 2,

But it is *Bildung* , not method, that best explains the nature of hermeneutical understanding, for it is *Bildung* that displays the structure of metaphor so that we can say "understanding" is itself fundamentally metaphorical. For example, the dialectical structure of "departure" *from* and "return" *to* self that defines *Bildung* can also be viewed as the circular structure of hermeneutical understanding and metaphor. Moments of *Bildung* -- or what Dewey called "growth" -- occur when the interpreter (or student) is altered not so much by acquiring a new piece of information but by assimilating a "new" horizon (usually through the hermeneutic experience of negation and metaphor) and, accordingly, learns to understand differently. This new understanding, in turn, initiates a new self-understanding which, in our view, defines a reciprocal transference like that which characterizes interactive metaphor and Gadamer's "fusion of horizons."

In our example of the dialectical metaphor as the *Emile/Frankenstein* "meeting," this "learning" becomes evident when we begin to move from the initial anomaly of monstrosity to the ideal type of the "two-sex society" understood as anomaly, to the "logic" of the negation itself. This latter phenomenon begins to happen when we begin to question where the ideal type "goes wrong" and, consequently, how an answer to this question can effect the

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what Gadamer calls the "historically effected consciousness" operates in much the same way as the process of what I refer to as "recursive preceptivity," and its attendant "validity tropes" can be construed as application, as in Gadamer's assertion that "Understanding . . . is always application" (*TM*, 309).

appropriate change, corrective, or application to the educational experience. But before we turn to the meeting itself, we need to familiarize ourselves with what Harold Bloom calls the "hidden roads that go from poem to poem."<sup>239</sup>

If we wanted to read allegory into the meeting and meaning of *Emile* and *Frankenstein*, we would have enough work to keep us busy for a long time. The specular or mirror-like affinity of the two works seems to presuppose an uncanny "Either/Or" forestructure that can be very appealing to an epistemology that recognizes binary opposition as an inherent logic of poetic language or tropology.<sup>240</sup> However, our hermeneutical position on Either/Or thinking is sympathetic with John Dewey's frustration with the human propensity to formulate "its beliefs in terms of *Either-Or's*, between which it recognizes no intermediate possibilities." This position also accords with that of Charlotte Bunch's "nonaligned feminism."<sup>241</sup> But maybe the simplest way to think about this hermeneutics of relating one metaphor to another without having to fall back on an Either/Or dichotomy is to

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<sup>239</sup> *Anxiety of Influence*, 96.

<sup>240</sup> Among the Either/Or's construed in *Emile/Frankenstein* terms that come readily to mind are the following: progressive/traditional education, hermeneutics/rhetoric, understanding/explanation, authority/reason, being/knowledge, goodness/degeneracy, *phronesis/techne*, reproduction/production, nature/science, and connection/alienation. This kind of "decoding" is what Claude Levi-Strauss claims for his "mythemes" and their elementary logic as the smallest common denominator of thought, what Northrup Frye identifies with the logic of type/anti-type, and what Paul De Man equates with reading as "the construction and undoing of the mirrorlike, specular structure that is always involved in a reading" (see De Man's "Anthropomorphism and Trope in the Lyric," in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*, ed. Harold Bloom [New York: Columbia University Press, 1984], 135).

<sup>241</sup> See John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), 17; and Charlotte Bunch, "Beyond Either/Or: Feminist Options," in *Building Feminist Theory* (New York: Longman, 1981), 44-56.

compare it to antiquity's custom of joining two halves of a *symbolon*, a Greek technical term for a token of remembrance and from which our word "symbol" is derived. The *symbolon* was an object that one's host broke in two. The host kept half and gave the other half to the guest, who then would use it like a "pass," the two halves fitting together in a future act of recognition or proof of identity. And here we might remember that the words "guest" and "host" go back to the same etymological root, the Latin word *hospes*, someone with whom one has reciprocal duties of hospitality, i.e., host is guest and guest is host. Thus we arrive at our contemporary view of the symbol as appearing to be free-standingly ambiguous but having a connection with what it points to, its "other half" which is, consequently, also the nature of the complementary reciprocation alluded to in our thesis. Northrup Frye compares this phenomenon to "the stub of a theater ticket which is not the performance, but will take us to where the performance is."<sup>242</sup> But if there is a career's worth of work for the critical theorist in explicating the allegories

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<sup>242</sup>The quote is from Northrup Frye, *Words with Power* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990), 109. However, the larger discussion of the symbol and its etymological connection with the *symbolon* is from Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, ed. Robert Bernasconi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 31-32; and the host/guest complementarity is explained by J. Hillis Miller, "The Critic as Host," in *Deconstruction and Criticism* (New York: Continuum, 1988), 221-222. I would add two more thoughts along these same lines: 1) Note that the word "teach" comes from the Old English word *taen* ("to show" or "to demonstrate"), a root which also generated our word "token." We are also reminded here (see Chapter 1) that the word "monster" derives from a Latin root that is still extant in the French verb, *montrer* ("to show"). And 2) the psychically-*cum*-naturally betrothed preSophie-esque Emile is not the marriage but points the way to the marriage. Another etymological "twist" to the guest/host reciprocity underwrites the "transubstantiation" of body as host. The word "host" derives from the same root for the consecrated bread of the Eucharist (*ostē*) which is from the same root for "sacrifice" or "victim" (*hostia*). For this etymology and its roundabout connection to the word "ghost," see Miller, 220.

between these two works, there also is an equal opportunity for the historian.

Although of different nationalities, historically, *Emile* and *Frankenstein* were shaped out of the same cultural mold, the French Revolution, where, we might even go so far as to say, they first "met" (or where they first met "hermeneutically"). "Hermeneutically" because Rousseau died in 1778 and Mary Shelley was not born until 1797, and their respective works were published fifty-six years apart (*Emile* in 1762 and *Frankenstein* in 1818). So how is it that they could have met, even if it were hermeneutically? The answer lies in the "midwifery" of Mary Shelley's mother, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797). In a sense she indirectly gave "birth" to *Frankenstein* as an indirect response to *Emile* and *Emile's* direct influence on the French Revolution.<sup>243</sup> In her *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*<sup>244</sup> Wollstonecraft attacks Rousseau and his characterization of Sophie in *Emile* for what Jane Roland Martin calls "trait genderization," or the "differential appraisal of traits according to sex."<sup>245</sup> That Mary

<sup>243</sup>For a discussion of the influence of Rousseau's works on the French Revolution (and in particular, *Emile's* influence) see Bernard Manin, "Rousseau," in *A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1989), 829-841.

<sup>244</sup>Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, Great Books in Philosophy Series (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus, 1989). The section that we will be concerned with is Wollstonecraft's critique of Rousseau's characterization of Sophie. This is found in Section I of her Chapter 5, "Animadversions on Some of the Writers Who Have Rendered Women Objects of Pity, Bordering on Contempt." In that chapter, Rousseau (and *Emile*) is one of five authors that she confronts.

<sup>245</sup>The quote is from *Reclaiming a Conversation*, 31. The criticism that Wollstonecraft was leveling against Rousseau might best be summed up with her declaration that "I war with the sensibility that led him [Rousseau] to degrade woman by making her the slave of love" (Wollstonecraft, 100).

Shelley read her mother's works as well as Rousseau's *Emile* has been well-documented,<sup>246</sup> and in our later discussion of "voice," we will take up this issue of Sophie and her relationship to Frankenstein's monster. But to follow this hermeneutical logic to term, we could point out that because Wollstonecraft was active politically and personally in the Revolution,<sup>247</sup> she, too, was directly influenced by *Emile*, so that later, once Mary Shelley had read her mother's work as well as Rousseau's *Emile*, the hermeneutical circle had been completed for the "birth" of *Frankenstein*. Whether or not we accept this convoluted sequence of events, the fact remains that the French Revolution enacted through Mary Wollstonecraft, with all of its implications for the modern world (and modern education), was, in fact, the "meeting" of *Emile* and *Frankenstein*. One might even say that this "meeting" or point of conception predetermined the Either/Or direction that modern education would follow -- either that of the "organicists" or that of the "technicists."

Now, given that *Emile* and *Frankenstein* can be read separately as *Bildungsromans* and together as "specular companion pieces," how

<sup>246</sup>See n. 223 and especially Richardson, 149-50 and O'Rourke, who describes a little-known essay on Rousseau that Mary Shelley wrote for an encyclopedia of French authors. Her focus in that essay, according to O'Rourke, was "parental neglect" (545).

<sup>247</sup>Wollstonecraft was married to William Godwin, the philosopher and novelist, who, in addition to his publishing achievements, "sat on a small committee that secured the publication of Paine's *Rights of Man* (cf., Wollstonecraft's *Rights of Women*). See in this regard, John Paxton, *Companion to the French Revolution* (New York: Facts on File), 91. Also, according to Muriel Spark, Wollstonecraft herself had been in Paris "to report on the Revolution" (*Mary Shelley* [New York: New American Library, 1987], 6). One wonders what influence the publication of Olympe DeGouges' *Declaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne* (1791) had on the writing and publication of Wollstonecraft's *Vindication* (1792). References to the work of DeGouges are hard to come by. (See Paxton, 92.)



is it that we can read them as a metaphor for our thesis? As *thematic* specular companion pieces, the texts of *Emile* and *Frankenstein* "meet" almost immediately, and we can gain the appropriate perspective on that meeting by taking a brief look at the title, subtitle, and epigraph of each text as a microtext for the whole.<sup>248</sup> From them we can draw out our "voice over" of voice and persona and its implications for the educational experience. As we said earlier, this way of reading depends on opening up those "hidden roads that go between poems." And since our reading of the two as a "dialectical metaphor" for the educational experience requires a "crisscrossing" of voice and persona, we need all the interpoetic roads that we can find. Where those open roads now lead us is to the "female" voice in the male persona of *Emile*, and the male voice in the "female" persona of *Frankenstein's* monster, and this "voice over" ultimately leads us to the conclusion that where these two works truly "meet" is in their sexism, and it is in the realization of this that both works finally "undo" themselves in regard to education, and that through this undoing, we also learn, hermeneutically, not so much *how* this failure can be avoided in the future but that it *must* be avoided.

Had he lived another forty years, Rousseau well might have had the Bloomian "metaleptic" tables turned on his own "(mis)reading" of

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<sup>248</sup>All citations from *Emile* and *Frankenstein* will be from the following editions: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979) and Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (New York: New American Library, 1965).

what would have been, in 1818, the newly-published *Frankenstein* ,  
*or the Modern Prometheus*.<sup>249</sup> Doubtless he wouldn't have gotten past  
the title page before feeling an uncanny *deja vu* of title, subtitle, and  
epigraph. Rousseau's title page reads as follows:

*Emile*  
*or*  
*On Education*

*Sanabilibus aegrotamus malis; ipsa quenos  
in rectum genitos natura, si emendari  
velimus, iuvat.*

-- Seneca: *de ira* B II, c. 13

(We are sick with evils that can be cured; and nature having  
brought us forth sound, itself helps us if we wish to be improved

-- "On Anger," Seneca [Bloom's Translation] )

And it follows the same schematic as Shelley's:

*Frankenstein*  
*or*  
*The Modern Prometheus*

"Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay  
To mold me Man, did I solicit thee  
From darkness to promote me?"

-- Milton, *Paradise Lost* X, 743-45

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<sup>249</sup> I use Bloom's jargon half-seriously. I do not presume to know the complexities of his theory of misprision, but his thinking on the rhetorical term *metalepsis* has some bearing on the overall theme of this thesis, i.e. "monsters, mothers, method, and metaphor." Bloom defines *metalepsis* as "a trope-reversing trope, a figure of a figure. In a *metalepsis*, a word is substituted metonymically for a word in a previous trope, so that a *metalepsis* can be called, maddeningly but accurately, a metonymy of a metonymy. . . The *metalepsis* leaps over the heads of other tropes and becomes a representation set against time, sacrificing the present to an idealized past or hoped-for future" (See *A Map of Misreading*, 102-03.)

For Rousseau's *Emile* it is the same schematic but with a difference.

Notice first of all that Rousseau's work focuses unambiguously on the student, Emile; whereas, for Shelley, the emphasis could fall on Victor Frankenstein as either the "student of the unhallow'd arts" or as the scientist and would-be teacher who abandons his "student."

Emile is a "man"<sup>250</sup> who speaks with the voice of a woman, and this is the voice of nature *herself*. It is the "different voice"

characterized by what Jane Roland Martin calls the three C's: "care, concern, and connection,"<sup>251</sup> to which we could add two more C's -- communication and compassion -- which would then give us the voice of "connected knowing" as it is described in *Women's Ways*. It is the primal voice of the mother that Rousseau claims for the "first education" which is "the most important," for it is only after the child, who is at birth a "disciple of nature," "leaves the Author of things" that it "degenerates in the hands of man."<sup>252</sup> This is the voice of sympathy, *amour de soi*, family, and the Good into which, according to Rousseau, we are all born. Emile, in other words, is becoming Nature herself by his becoming a man. Victor Frankenstein's monster, in contrast, speaks with a male voice through a "female" persona. The male voice is the patriarchal voice of an educated nineteenth-century male, a voice, by the way, that the monster

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<sup>250</sup>Other than the direct male/female distinctions Rousseau makes for the purposes of forming the perfect union of Emile and Sophie, he is very straightforward about Emile's manhood: "On leaving my hands, he will, I admit, be neither magistrate nor soldier nor priest. He will, in the first place, be a man" (Bloom, 42).

<sup>251</sup>J.R. Martin, *Changing the Educational Landscape* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 8.

<sup>252</sup>Bloom, n. 37, 37, 61.

acquires only after it discovers the three texts which define that tradition: Milton's *Paradise Lost*, a volume of Plutarch *Lives*, and Goethe's *Sorrows of Young Werter*. This "education," in tandem with what the monster calls the "godlike science" that is language, gives the creature the necessary "tradition" to gain enough of an historical consciousness of that tradition to realize that its morality is inherently self-contradictory, and like John the Savage in Huxley's *Brave New World*, this understanding becomes too much to bear. It is the realization that *techne* (or the abuse of method) cannot be an end in itself, regardless of whether it is Judaeo-Christian Reason, Classical edification, or German Romanticism. And when this realization comes for one of the oppressed of the world, one of the excluded, one of the controlled of the world, its physical expression is the release of that repression in the form rage. So what we begin to notice about the monster is that its male voice of nineteenth-century patriarchy is coming from a female persona, the image of the oppressed, subordinate woman that was so vividly self-evident to Mary Shelley and her mother.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>253</sup>The arguments for Frankenstein's monster as woman are very ingenious and convincing. One can turn, for example, to Richardson's thesis that the novel is "pervasively concerned with . . . the dilemma of self-education and no less problematic "sexual education" which for women in the romantic period, is virtually the sole alternative to it" (149). And, as Richardson goes on to remind us, "the notion that women are morally, as well as physically, deformed in comparison to men surfaces throughout English writing on female conduct . . ." (151). And finally, "a further link between the male monster and woman as constructed by domestic ideology [is that] both are 'forbidden to have their own desires'" (155). Other readings offer arguments for the autobiographical nature of the monster (Knoepflmacher); a feminist psychoanalytic reading of the monster as woman (Barbara Johnson); and a deconstructionist reading of the monster as Eve or the archetypal woman (Gubar and Gilbert).

We can take this student-teacher ratio a little further by trying to make a case for it being the other way around, regardless of what the title says. Could Jean-Jacques as teacher, for example, be thought of as the real focus of *Emile*? One could argue that he is as omnipresent as his student and, to an extent, even more so than Emile, given Jean-Jacques's omniscience. But this might simply be an issue of degree rather than of kind, for Jean-Jacques is more like a "negative capability," what Dewey would call the ability of someone to "provide the environment which shall organize the instincts." And in this sense, Jean-Jacques is not so much a "teacher" as he is "Natural Reason" (or, for that matter, God) personified, and this "Natural Reason" can be understood as being as much a part of Emile's "voice" as it is of Jean-Jacques' meditations on himself as teacher.<sup>254</sup>

But what about Victor Frankenstein? Could he be understood as the student rather than the "teacher"? There is certainly a strong case to be made for the novel as a kind of *Bildungsroman* that details the twists and turns of Victor's educational process (a process, like

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<sup>254</sup>Dewey's quote is from *Democracy and Education* (New York, Macmillan, 1966), 115, where he says that "Rousseau was right, introducing a much-needed reform into education, in holding that the structure and activities of the organs furnish the *conditions* of all teaching of the use of the organs; but profoundly wrong in intimating that they supply not only the conditions but also the *ends* of their development" (114). The point that we are making here about Jean-Jacques as teacher is antithetical to a Victor Frankenstein as teacher, who, as Dewey would say, allows for the "spontaneous overflow of unlearned powers" (114). The "Force," one might say, is not with Victor Frankenstein. It might also be of interest to note that the pedagogical relationship between Jean-Jacques and Emile might be read as Rousseau's interpretation of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. In this scenario, Jean-Jacques can be identified with God or Divine Reason, Emile with Adam, and Sophie with Eve. (The connection between Eve and the monster in *Frankenstein* has been described by Susan Gubar. See her essay, "Horror's Twin: Mary Shelley's Monstrous Eve.")

that of Celie in *The Color Purple*, that resembles a series of hermeneutical experiences of negation). We follow him, for instance, as he "discovers" the alchemists, Albertus Magnus and Paracelsus, only to eventually "transcend" them in favor of "natural philosophy" and chemistry, the study of which inspires him to "pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation."<sup>255</sup> But this can also be just a "background check" for the benefit of the reader, for the real *Bildungsroman*, one could argue, begins when the monster tells Victor its own story of how it came to self-educated consciousness.<sup>256</sup> And, as we learn from the telling of that story, it had been a process for the monster that is strikingly similar to the experiences of many of today's women as well as the alienated, homeless, and otherwise marginalized children, who are as disconnected from their teachers (and parents) as the monster had been from Victor. And as we are all aware, that uncaring, (dis)connected knowing, as it happens in today's society (and in the novel), culminates in rage and violence. So in the end, if we are to think of Victor as a student, he is a student who is unable to confront consequences in order to "grow" in his capacity for judgment and tact, and if we are to think of him as a teacher, he is a

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<sup>255</sup>Shelley, 47.

<sup>256</sup>Chapters 11-16 can be read as the monster's educational autobiography and, as Richardson has pointed out, Shelley's parody of *Emile*. And here again we meet up with *Paradise Lost*. We learn that it is one of the books that the monster reads as a text for its self-education. So given the *symbolon*-like character of *Emile* and *Frankenstein*, if we can think of Jean-Jacques and Emile as a God/Adam analogue, then Victor Frankenstein, in a "crossover" role, can be read as that biblical Prometheus, Lucifer. In the context of the novel, of course, Victor and the monster parody that God/Adam analogue.

teacher who is incapable of the self-conscious reflection that is necessary for differentiating negative prejudice from the consequences of that prejudice.

This distinction becomes even clearer when we weigh in the subtitles of each work. For *Frankenstein*, the *Modern Prometheus* *mythos* contrasts sharply with the *ethos* suggested by Rousseau's *On Education*. The reason for this contrast is in the richness of the Prometheus persona. The "Prometheus" of the *Modern Prometheus* continues the Ancient Greek story of the fire-stealing, man-making, forethinking, mythic revolutionary with whom the young nineteenth-century Shelleyan Romantics identified. But even with these multiple personalities, (one begins to wonder if he is not just another incarnation of Hermes), Prometheus cannot shake his primary identification with forethought and hubris,<sup>257</sup> both of which are central to Rousseau's argument. And so we meet Victor Frankenstein, the antipode of Rousseau's vision, as a Promethean-like victim of what Rousseau would call Frankenstein's own *amour-propre*, as well as his *prevoyance*, or foresight. We can "hear" these "flaws" in Victor's description of his God-like purpose. He says, "A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me."<sup>258</sup> In contrast, what holds the

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<sup>257</sup>Note the etymology of "Prometheus": *pro* -, before + *mathein*, to learn. Implicit here are the connections with the essential role that forestructure plays in hermeneutics and, by contrast, the bad reputation that "foresight" has for Rousseau ("Foresight! Foresight, which takes us ceaselessly beyond ourselves and often places us where we shall never arrive. This is the true source of all our miseries" (82).) As for hubris, the Church turned it into the first of the Seven Deadly Sins, i.e., Pride.

<sup>258</sup>Shelley, 52.

center together for Emile is his *sentiment de l'existence*, that feeling of relatedness in and for all things. His is not the separation of subject and object that defines the scientific existence of a "Modern Prometheus"; rather, Emile feels a pathos of presence from a loving *Auteur* who knows that the Good is the love of the natural order of things. And unlike Victor Frankenstein, who is constantly looking over his shoulder, always paranoid that something is following him, Emile feels his God's love of that natural order within himself and all around him. For Frankenstein, on the other hand, the center cannot hold, and in the end, he becomes the degenerative agency Rousseau identifies in the first sentence of *Emile* :

"Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things; everything degenerates in the hands of man."<sup>259</sup> Frankenstein is also characterized by Rousseau's observation that, "In the present state of things a man abandoned to himself in the midst of other men from birth would be the most disfigured of all,"<sup>260</sup> which is a fair description of both Victor *and* his Promethean offspring. However, when we turn to Rousseau's subtitle, *On Education*, we find that his concern is with the concept of education itself, not with a "bigger-than-life" *mythos* that carries with it the implications of Ancient Greek tragedy.<sup>261</sup> His concern is with *sympathy*, not with tragedy as

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<sup>259</sup>Rousseau, 37.

<sup>260</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>261</sup>What needs to surface at this point is Gadamer's inclusion of the Aeschylean formula of "learning through suffering" that is so important in his explanation of the hermeneutical experience (*Erfahrung*). He says, "This phrase does not mean only that we become wise through



an educational principle, and what is most conspicuously missing in the Victor/Monster educational experience, namely, sympathy, becomes in the Jean-Jacques/Emile experience a credential for humankind(ness).<sup>262</sup>

Lastly, the epigraph of each text tells us a lot about these two educational experiences. In both works we are dealing with a "new" Adam, and in spite of the Judaeo-Christian and Ancient Greek traditions surrounding *Frankenstein's* subtitle and epigraph, both of these Adams have been demythologized. For Rousseau, that demythification comes out of the Stoic Naturalism of someone like Seneca, and for Shelley, it is the result of the New Science Naturalism of Bacon. Undoubtedly much can be made of these two traditions as being representative of the philosophical and cultural contexts from which each text found its wellspring, but here the point to be made has more to do with the "voice" of each epigraph.

Notice first that Adam *is* the speaking voice in the *Frankenstein* quote. In what the Freudians might call a "defense strategy," Adam scornfully presses his Maker to give a full accounting

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suffering and that our knowledge of things must first be corrected through deception and undeception. . . . Aeschylus means more than this. He refers to the reason why this is so. What a man [sic] has to learn through suffering is not this or that particular thing, but insight into the limitations of humanity, into the absoluteness of the barrier that separates man [sic] from the divine. It is ultimately a religious insight--the kind of insight that gave birth to Greek tragedy" (TM, 356-57). The link with the Prometheus epigraph is the obvious one of authorship, i.e., Aeschylus' play *Prometheus Bound*, but there is also the connection between the hermeneutical "experience of negation" and the "religious insight" into hubris.

<sup>262</sup>We cannot seem to escape from that black-and-white, Boris Karloffian image of an abandoned, abused, homeless, pathetic figure, who, because he is "un-sympathized with" stands in a macabre wood, howling "like a wild beast" (Shelley, 130).

of why he, Adam, even exists. Like an angry child or adolescent, Adam is not about to take the "heat" or the responsibility for his actions. Instead, he projects the sense of his own inadequacies onto the only logical alternative, his Father, who, because Adam is the first human being, just happens to be God Himself. And it is this dissatisfaction with self and its consequent blasphemous and, ultimately, violent expression that sounds the theme of Shelley's novel: alienation. But when we turn to Rousseau's epigraph, what we hear is not a characterization but the discursive voice of Seneca himself, who is prescribing the remedies of nature, saying something to the effect that, "Nature helps those who help themselves." The shift from the Garden of Eden to organic gardening has occurred, and for Rousseau it is this evolutionary naturalism that conflicts so unmistakably with, basically, its perverted incarnation, Frankensteinian unnaturalism and its irrevocable offspring, man as "angry ape." That that offspring goes against Rousseau's grain and rages at itself and its Maker conflicts with Seneca's view, for in the Frankensteinian worldview, these are evils that *cannot* be cured because this technologized Adam, as Rousseau puts it, "loves deformity, monsters."<sup>263</sup> However, for Rousseau it is this very rage that *can* be cured<sup>264</sup> if, like the organic gardener, the teacher tends to the "*contourner*" of the

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<sup>263</sup>Rousseau, 37.

<sup>264</sup>Bloom's footnote to the epigraph summarizes the significance of this "rage" and its attendant, potential cures: "The work from which this quotation is drawn, "On Anger," is significant for Rousseau's intention. Anger is the passion which must be overcome, and his analysis of human psychology gives it a central place. It has pervasive and protean effects. His correction of education consists essentially in extirpating the roots of anger" (*Emile*, 481).

student's "*mode*," "like a tree in his garden."<sup>265</sup> Or, as Rousseau puts it in an aphoristic continuation of that gardening metaphor,<sup>266</sup> "Plants are shaped by cultivation, and men [sic] by education."

What Victor Frankenstein did not take into account is this very extirpation of the roots of anger. One might say that by the very unnatural act of creating man according to the Frankensteinian Laws of Nature, he actually omitted Rousseau's version of Natural Law, and in so doing, inadvertently created the archetypal violent rage that evolved into the persecuted, howling monster. Thus, from Rousseau's point of view, Victor's failure as an "unnatural" teacher can be attributed to his excluding the first two of the three kinds of education upon which we are all dependent: "nature, men [sic], and things." Rousseau tells us that, "The internal development of our faculties and organs is the education of nature. The use that we make of this development is the education of men. And what we acquire from our own experience about the objects which affect us is the education of things."<sup>267</sup> That Victor's creature was deprived of his natural growth and development is obvious enough.<sup>268</sup> That the

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<sup>265</sup>Rousseau, 37.

<sup>266</sup>*Ibid*, 38.

<sup>267</sup>*Ibid*.

<sup>268</sup>The point can be made semi-playfully by thinking about the teacher education course called "Human Growth and Development." For the monster, of course, the "Human" part of that course description would have been non-applicable. We can also turn to a passage in *Emile* that must have had a strong impression on Mary Shelley's reading of Rousseau and the subsequent development of her own ideas about monstrous progeny: "Let us suppose that a child had at his [sic] birth the stature and the strength of a grown man, that he emerged, so to speak, fully armed from his mother's womb as did Pallas from the brain of Jupiter. This man-child would be a perfect imbecile, an automaton, an immobile and almost insensible statue. . . . He would have only a single idea, that is, of the 'I' to which he would relate all of his sensations; and this idea or, rather, this sentiment would be the only thing that he would have beyond what an ordinary baby

creature was deprived of "men" is also evident in the absolute excoriation and abandonment to which it was subjected. What was left was an education by "things," which turned out to be cruelly insufficient. The irony here is that, according to Rousseau, of the three kinds of education, the only one over which we can assume any degree of control is that of "men." But tragically for the monster, it proves to be the one that Victor as scientist, teacher, and new Promethean, was incapable of mastering for himself.

But in the end what can we conclude about this meeting of *Frankenstein* and *Emile* ? What is it that makes this "cross-genderized" reading of the two works a metaphor for education and for our thesis? What does it teach us? What do we learn from it? As we pointed out earlier, we can take this meeting as a dialectical metaphor for Jane Roland Martin's "two-sex society." However, what we learn from the metaphor is not the discursive facts for what such an ideal would be like but rather what such an ideal type would *not* be like. In other words, the metaphor does not tell us *how* such an educational ideal can come about but *why* it cannot, and this is the in-between where the two works truly meet. For at the very point where each work verges on fulfilling the utopian promise of its educational ideal, that ideal breaks down because of the sexism immanent in each work. For *Emile* this becomes evident in light of Jane Roland Martin's argument that Rousseau created Emile in the

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has" (Rousseau, 61).

likeness of Plato's philosopher-king, with all of the attendant responsibilities that come with such a protectorate, the first and foremost being full citizenship. But Rousseau denies the privilege of citizenship and gender equity to Sophie. As Martin points out, Rousseau certainly recognized the problem of Plato's Republic being led by male and female guardians alike as the problem of what to do with the responsibilities of family and children. Plato's solution is to "farm" the children out to the appropriate surrogates. But for Rousseau, this cannot be, for the family unit recapitulates the unity of the Republic. The Republic, in other words, cannot maintain its natural order without the natural order of the family to shore it up. Rousseau solves this problem by giving those domestic (or what Martin calls "reproductive") duties exclusively to Sophie, who will, in turn, then be the perfect complement to citizen Emile.<sup>269</sup> So at the climactic point when Emile is to become a complete human being,<sup>270</sup> that is, when he is finally "ready" for his marriage to Sophie, we learn of the genderized place of Sophie in the educational scheme of things. We could say that at this point we witness the complementary reciprocation between Emile and Sophie, but it is a mutuality that can only exist in Emile's world.

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<sup>269</sup>Jane Roland Martin, "Sophie and Emile: A Case Study of Sex Bias in the History of Educational Thought" *Harvard Educational Review* 51, no. 3 (August 1981). A later variation of this argument appears in her "Transforming the Liberal Curriculum: Rewriting the Story of Sophie and Emile" Working Paper no. 56 (Wellesley: Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, 1985).

<sup>270</sup>This is dramatically as well as chronologically climactic. We learn about Sophie in the last Book, Book V.

Similarly, this breakdown occurs in *Frankenstein* with a "marriage" analogue. When Victor denies the monster's request for a mate, for someone who would be an equal, he destroys the most uplifting hope of the monster's "life." And with this denial, the future of any sort of complementary union, any "fusion of horizons," is denied as well. To have honored the monster's request so that it could finally be "sympathized with" is the point at which the recognition of woman as human being would have been affirmed as well, but Victor and the patriarchal tradition that he represents cannot bring himself to make that most human of all admissions and chooses instead to destroy what little hope the monster had managed to have in a tradition that made it an object of scorn and humiliation.

But if, as we have claimed, this is a metaphor for the metaphoricity of the educational experience, what applicative relevance does it have for the classroom? As we try to demonstrate in the next chapter, this hermeneutical approach to the educational experience can be translated into the "language of learning" by way of talking about anomalies, metaphors by which those anomalies can be interpreted, activities through which a student can work to "test" the validity of those metaphors or tropes, and finally to make the necessary corrections to the application itself. Cumulatively, this is the process we have been referring to as the hermeneutical experience of negation.<sup>271</sup> And what we have tried to demonstrate with our reading of *Frankenstein* and *Emile* as a metaphor for that

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<sup>271</sup>A variation on this "sequence" is described by Petrie in "Metaphor and Learning."

metaphoricity, i.e., our thesis, is that the educational experience begins with an anomaly (Frankenstein's monster) revealed through "creative negativity" which is that kind of experience that results in the opposite of what was intended (Victor's intention to create a new species of "beautiful people" gone awry). And this "opposite" is usually inexplicable given the experiencer's (student's or teacher's) preconceptual framework. What is then required in order to make sense of things is a metaphorical relation (*Emile*) that might build on what is familiar in that personal forestructure and thus generate an interpretation of the anomaly (an androgenous or "two-sex" society characterized by our "voice over"). The testing or projecting of the validity of that interpretation ("validity trope") is the continuous reconstruction of the complementary reciprocation between the ontology of philosophical hermeneutics and the epistemology of *Women's Ways of Knowing*. What this activity turns up for us in the meeting of *Frankenstein* and *Emile* is that where they truly meet is in their sexism (Sophie's "place" in society and Victor's refusal to make a mate for his creature), and the educational "corrective" that follows suit is the transumptive or metaphorical self-understanding that has been effected by a recognition of the "tyrrany of the hidden prejudice," so that what we "learn" is that education cannot be education for liberty without this "new" (in)fusion of horizons which is the historically effected consciousness. That this approach to the

educational experience finds its “home away from home” in the multicultural nonsexist classroom is the subject of the next chapter.



## CHAPTER 6

### APPLICATION

"As I read, however, I applied much personally to my own feelings and condition. I found myself similar yet at the same time strangely unlike to the beings concerning whom I read and to whose conversation I was a listener."

-- The "Monster" to Victor Frankenstein in *Frankenstein*

Once it is demonstrated that man and woman are not and ought not to be constituted in the same way in either character or temperament, it follows that they ought not to have the same education.

-- Rousseau, *Emile V*

No 'advanced educator' can allow himself [sic] to be so absorbed in the question of what a child ought to be as to exclude the discovery of what he [sic] is.

-- Jane Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics*

In practice, what would it mean if the educational experience were, in fact, essentially hermeneutical? Or, more to the point, how would our thesis be translated from dissertational discourse into the everyday classroom "language of learning"? What would it mean if we practiced the preaching of our thesis that the educational experience is the continuous reconstruction of the complementary reciprocation between the ontology of philosophical hermeneutics and the epistemology of *Women's Ways*?

At first, what we are proposing might appear to be yet another case of ivory towerism, just another example of philosophical

discourse that has no applicability in the classroom, or if it does (so the defensive denial might go), "Only the brightest students would be able to profit, so the idea is elitist."<sup>272</sup> But the task of application is not really as formidable as it seems to be, for we have had, in Chapter 2, some introduction to what such a practice might be like as well as what such a practice would *not* be like, namely, the behavioral objectives model of instruction. In Chapter 2 we also briefly surveyed several models of what we termed "explicit" and "tacit" hermeneutical approaches to the classroom experience, and we also saw that the "connected teaching" of *Women's Ways* with its ties to Paulo Freire's problem-posing approaches to teaching and opposition to the "banking-concept" of teaching can also be understood as compatible with philosophical hermeneutics. We saw, too, that certain "pedagogies of understanding" and "constructivist" practices are also compatible with our thesis. Furthermore, in Chapter 3, we saw that John Dewey's theory of experience and education -- the similarities between his integrative concept of "the past of the living present" and the concept of the hermeneutical circle -- offers us another direction for getting us off the drawing board and into the day-to-day problems of the "real" classroom.

So although the basic, practical, pedagogical views of this thesis are not necessarily predominant views, they are themselves familiar

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<sup>272</sup>This example is from a list of "denials" that were discussed in the context of "A Humanities Approach to Education," an NEH-sponsored seminar for Montgomery County (MD) Public School System teachers during the spring of 1985 and 1986. The seminar was led by Dr. George Usdansky, whose ideas have been assimilated into the above discussion.

to thoughtful students in the field. However, even for many of those thoughtful practitioners, these views have become semi-hackneyed and, accordingly, have slipped into the pejorative, dead metaphor office of educational jargon. The challenge, then, specifically for this chapter and generally for the thesis as a whole, is not simply to recycle or to repackage existing (or at least perceived to be existing) classroom practices under a new and "catchier" label; it is to create for the student *and* for the teacher the "edifying" open space and social hope necessary to counteract the "fear of freedom" and the defensive denials that go along with it.<sup>273</sup> It is, in words that we have used previously, the challenge of pulling the plug on the "tyrannical machine" that is running our teacher preparation programs and, by extension, the majority of classrooms in today's public schools. It is the kind of tyranny that is self-perpetuating so that a postsecondary student teacher who *does* receive an "edifying" understanding of the educational experience will, during his or her

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<sup>273</sup>I use "edifying" here in relation to education in the sense that Richard Rorty uses the term in relation to philosophy. (Note too the connection between edifying/edifice and the building/*Bildung* homophone described in Chapter 4.) In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979) he builds his case for an "edifying philosophy" as "the attempt to prevent conversation from degenerating into inquiry, into a research program" (372). "The point of edifying philosophy," he says, "is to keep the conversation going rather than to find objective truth. . . . The danger which edifying discourse tries to avert is that some given vocabulary, some way in which people might come to think of themselves, will deceive them into thinking that from now on all discourse could be, or should be, normal discourse" (377). And finally, "to see wisdom as consisting in the ability to sustain a conversation, is to see human beings as generators of new descriptions rather than beings one hopes to be able to describe accurately" (378). The reference to the "fear of freedom" is intended to echo what Erich Fromm called our attempt to "escape from freedom," to escape from fears about our human condition. In terms of our thesis, this would be the fear of *not* having understanding as applied theory or *techne*, because *techne* is perceived to be a clear authority, and any breach of that authority would lead to the "calamitous" condition of "subjectivity," uncertainty, and personal judgment and responsibility (*phronesis*).

practice teaching requirement, more than likely get "processed" into the machine that the teacher preparation program spent so much time theoretically deconstructing. And it goes without saying that that same machine is having the same effect on the school students themselves, thus making the machine truly tyrannical.

In the course of our thesis, this is what we have tried to portray as "monstrosity," *techne*, sexism, and as the "abuse of method" with all of the negative prejudices contingent upon that closed-mindedness. Confronting these denials, these fears of freedom and the obstacles they create, is the critical challenge facing the schools and the schools of education today. How do we get students in the schools, students in the academy, and teachers in the same to recognize these denials for what they are -- self-deceptions about "true" motives? How do you tell an experienced teacher that the resistance she is offering to "that old Progressive stuff" has everything to do with stereotype and an unfounded motive to escape from freedom and nothing to do with the nature of learning and the educational experience? How do you tell this to student teachers? The task of this thesis is to suggest that a "fusing" of philosophical hermeneutics and *Women's Ways* provides an ontological way of thinking about the educational experience, and what this means in terms of classroom practice is that the responsibility of the teacher is nothing less than getting students to understand who they *are* by acknowledging who they have been and who they will be, and that this Being that can be

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understood is language, not some "monster" created *ex nihilo* by a mistaken belief in *techne* as the way to truth. A description of how we might go about doing this in the classroom is what follows.

The annotated lesson plans that make up the rest of this chapter are actual classroom practices that I experimented with during the 1994 Spring Semester at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa. The unit was taught in a course called "Human Relations in Teaching,"<sup>274</sup> and the students were juniors and seniors in the Teacher Preparation Program, majoring in a variety of content areas in both the secondary and the elementary education tracks. My rationale for choosing this course was that it is a state-mandated course in Multicultural Non-Sexist Education (MCNSE) for teacher certification, so it provided me with students from different cultural backgrounds (as best as is possible at Simpson with its ninety-six percent plus student population drawn from Iowa), and from different content areas. And because these students would be a mix of both the elementary and the secondary education tracks, it was the closest thing to an interdisciplinary course in the teacher education program. The reason for choosing an "interdisciplinary" course is that it gave me the opportunity at the outset to distance myself and my students from a taxonomic approach to the educational experience, for as we have tried to make clear throughout the thesis, any such compartmentalization of knowledge would be counterintuitive for a

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<sup>274</sup>The ideas were generated during a 1993 summer seminar taught by Dr. Theresa McCormick at Iowa State University.

hermeneutical approach to the teaching/learning situation. But perhaps the most important reason for choosing this course was that it has, as one of its components, the issue of sexism in education. This, then, I recognized as an appropriate forum for trying out the *Women's Ways* part of my thesis. It gave me the opportunity to begin with the least curricular resistance so that my planning and teaching could be concentrated on coming up with ways to effect the "continuous reconstruction of the complementary reciprocation between philosophical hermeneutics and *Women's Ways*." And one of the real challenges with which I was faced in this regard was the challenge that we are confronting in this chapter -- being able to convince the students of the difficulty in and the importance of applying the "infusion" process to their own respective content areas and educational environments as teachers themselves.<sup>275</sup>

But before turning to the lesson plans, we need to become familiar with some of the background assumptions about the hermeneutical nature of the educational experience as we are proposing it. These can be thought of as three "theses" or "pedagogical moves" presupposed in the planning of the course

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<sup>275</sup>I do not distinguish between what the schools are referring to as the "infusion" of MCNSE material into the regular classroom and what goes on in the classroom that I am proposing as an application of our thesis that the educational experience is hermeneutical. In fact, it seems like the schools have their jargon wrong. Instead of "in-fusion," which suggests some kind of authoritative inoculation, we might be better served by noting that the "fusion" part, at least, accords with our thesis and Gadamer's "fusion of horizons." Aside from the misnomer, the only other difference is that many of the "infused" classrooms have already been "processed" by the "tyrannical machine." The hermeneutical approach that I am proposing eludes methodological abuse.

itself,<sup>276</sup> and each "thesis" has its own "applications" or assignments for the course in general. Focusing on the three characteristics that both the educational and the hermeneutical experiences have in common, these "theses," which were introduced in Chapter 1, are "historicality," "linguisticity," and "dialectic." The lesson plans which follow them make up one unit in the Human Relations course.

1. *The education experience as hermeneutical is historical.* This does not mean "historical" in the prevailing historicist interpretation of a cyclical cause-and-effect relationship. Nor does it mean "historical" in the sense that it has had a "long history." What we need to keep in mind here is Gadamer's notions of the "historically effected consciousness," openness, and the historicality of our (the students' and the teachers') prejudgments. *Application:* As a first day assignment, students are asked to write a two-page autobiography to be submitted the next class meeting. At that time I collect them and, in return, give the students my own two-page autobiography. This seemingly platitudinous dialogic exchange accomplishes four very important goals, all of which are circumscribed by Gadamer's notion of a "fusion of horizons": 1) to discover any special needs that my students might have; 2) to reveal the student preconceptions that I will be dealing with during the semester and to reveal to them my

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<sup>276</sup>These "moves" are "teaching strategies" that can be applied to any course. They might be thought of as the first building blocks for an across-the-curriculum application of our thesis. The "theses" that follow have been adapted from Richard Palmer's *Hermeneutics* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), 242-253.

own preconceptual framework; and 3) to get students to make reflective decisions about what may or may not be “historically” significant enough to include in a two-page story of one’s *Bildung*. (This assignment is revisited at the end of the course in conjunction with a culminating assignment described next.)

2. *The educational experience as hermeneutical is linguistic.* The key idea here is Gadamer’s thesis that “Being that can be understood is language.” Language, in other words, is not merely an instrument to to be called up whenever a “need” arises but is, in fact, the medium through which Being “unconceals” itself. *Application:* All of the writing and discussion assignments during the semester are designed to provide the students with the opportunity to reflect on how they use language and what that language can tell them about themselves in a social context. For example, one of the culminating activities is the writing of an “intellectual autobiography” or mini-*Bildungsroman* which is a revisiting, a “reading” or interpretation of the semester’s writing assignments. They give “themselves” a hermeneutical reading with the added twist that I return to them their “first-day autobiographies” and ask them to read and to contextualize that assignment as a baseline experience for the semester. They are also asked to reflect on the experiences of negation as they show up in the patterns of their semester’s development. This activity takes several class meetings of peer discussion and large group review. Several students read/report on



their work to the entire class, which is followed by further discussion about the nature of learning.

3. *The educational experience as hermeneutical is dialectical.* This "thesis" embodies the other two and is the inspirational source for most of the ideas that are included in this section's applications and lesson plans. The key point to remember here is that hermeneutical understanding can only be achieved when students begin to conceive of experience "not as consciousness perceiving objects, but as understanding encountering a negativity which broadens and illuminates self-understanding."<sup>277</sup> This is not to suggest that students must be taught Heidegger or Gadamerian hermeneutics in order to begin "truly" to understand. However, it does imply that *teachers*, of all people, should have *at least* this ontological insight into experience, understanding, *Bildung* and the educational experience so that their students might have a chance to see *why* experience is not the simple "accessing" of compartmentalized, neatly organized, and cleanly efficient virtual experience that they get from the electronic media.<sup>278</sup> Instead, they need to become

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<sup>277</sup>Palmer, 242. Later he coins the term "creative negativity" for the hermeneutical experience of *Erfahrung*, the apperception of which seems to me to be at the heart of the educational project and is an important pedagogical move in my approach to the thesis. We might also bear in mind here Palmer's succinct definition of hermeneutical understanding: "Understanding is most open when it is conceived of as something capable of being seized by being rather than as a self-sufficient grasping consciousness" (244).

<sup>278</sup>Because I am focusing mainly on the preparation of teachers, the immediate issue is not one of canon and curriculum. What's at stake in the teacher prep forum has its own political as well as philosophical entanglements. My thinking on the political side of things has to do with established power behind the state-required courses for teacher licensure. Why, for example, must so much attention be paid to educational psychology (at least two courses) when its contribution to gender equity and human connectedness have been negligible? It seems that this area of the preparation regimen "fused" with the basic philosophical foundations, methods, and

conscious of experience as a life-world made up of uncertainties, ambiguities, conflicts, and humiliation.

To understand this means to understand that we do not "use" history, language, and world as we would an instrument or a tool, but that we *participate* in this "Being that can be understood," and that only through participation will "truth," "connected knowing," and Deweyan social hope reveal itself. But this "truth" is not an objective fact; it cannot be plotted out on some behavioral grid and then "captured" and "possessed" by tracking it down with the "correct" rational strategy. This "truth" simply "happens" by reminding us of human finitude and of the infinity of possibilities that constitute that irony of negation. Thus the more "experiences" students can have of "ontological experience," the better prepared they will be to accept "truth" for what it is and not for what it ought to be, and to participate in and to fuse horizons with not only the familiar life-world but the multicultural strangeness of Being as well. And this is accomplished dialectically. *Application:* The activity that comes closest to embodying all of these characteristics is a practice teaching session in which each student becomes intimately involved in the hermeneutical nature of the educational experience.<sup>279</sup>

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human relations requirements could very adequately provide students with the "linguistic turn" that would allow them to begin to think of the educational experience as an ontological event of being or, if they so choose, to continue to think of it as the fossilized epistemology that it is. At least there would be the conditions necessary for Gadamer's "fusion of horizons" to happen "over and above their wanting and doing."

<sup>279</sup>This is an activity that I use in Foundations of Education, Secondary Methods, as well as Human Relations. I think that it should be used across the curriculum in both the pre-college and the postsecondary classroom. The point that I find myself returning to is one that I tried to make

The "short version" of this assignment is that it is basically a role playing activity, whereby each student teaches the class as if it were a "real" pre-college class in a specific content area (the student teacher's content area), at a specific grade level, and in a specific location or cultural context. Each session lasts at least forty minutes, with an additional ten minutes added on for an "introduction" that describes the first five sections of the plan (see below) and opens the floor to peer review and questioning of the propriety of those aspects. Each student is required to teach two sessions during the semester and is required to meet with me at least one class meeting prior to the assigned teaching date, the preliminary meeting when we review a first draft of the lesson plan.

The "long version" can be summed up by describing the "lesson plan" that I require of each session. Unlike the traditional lesson plan format, this plan is generated hermeneutically. It is organized around what I call the "key idea" -- not the instructional objective -- and around a "local hermeneutics"<sup>280</sup> -- not an impersonal "I-Them" relationship between the teacher and the students. It has seven parts: 1) Context or Environment, 2) Key Idea, 3) Question(s) to Which This

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in the previous chapter: if we think of the educational experience as fundamentally metaphorical, then "learning is teaching" becomes what we have called a "validity trope," which plays itself out in the proverbial "teacher wisdom" that "you don't really know something until you teach it."

<sup>280</sup>This is based upon what Shaun Gallagher calls a "local hermeneutics." He maintains (along with Freire) that "A hermeneutical situation is always a localized one." And that "Local hermeneutics attempts, in its descriptive and explanatory parts, to give an account of how and why a particular interpretation is actually taking place in specific circumstances and, in its prescriptive part, to prescribe how it ought to take place." See *Hermeneutics and Education* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 331-332.

Lesson is an Answer, 4) Curriculum, 5) Student Preconceptions 6) Procedure, 7) Evaluation, 8) Bibliography.<sup>281</sup> Remember, this is required of each student in the Human Relations class, and because of the course mandate (practice at infusing MCNSE into content areas across the curriculum), it becomes a natural environment for the cultivation of our hermeneutical approach to education.

1. *Context or environment.* The student teacher must "project" his or her initial idea onto a specific grade-level and content area (e.g., 10th Grade English), in a specific geographical and cultural locale (e.g., "a small Iowa town comparable to Indianola with a population of 12,000, with one high school where ninety-nine percent of the students are white Euro-Americans," etc.), at an approximate time in the academic year (e.g. "half-way through the first marking period"). Students are required to research this data for the most current and complete information available on a given school district, its curriculum, its student population, and the general cultural milieu of the given town or city.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Embedded in this plan are four areas of "topical invention": "Environment," "Curriculum," "Student," and "Teacher." I have appropriated this matrix from the work that Professors David Owen and Sonja Darlington had done collaboratively with a Social Foundations of Education class at Iowa State University and have described in their unpublished papers, "Topical Invention in Curriculum: Pluralism in Social Foundations."

<sup>282</sup> Most of the students rely on the "forestructure" of their own school experience and begin to construct meaning out of that material. And this too gives the course instructor (me) a ground upon which to engage students in "the logic of question and answer." For instance, when a student is asked, "What would be taught at this point in the marking period and why is it taught then?" the student's response is usually something like, "That's the way we did it when I was a student at the school." The "opening" here for the instructor is one that allows him or her to "negate" that experience by comparing it to other curricular scopes and sequences, the detailing of which can lead the student to "constructed knowing" and hermeneutical understanding. That is, the student can be led to recognize that curriculum is a function of culture, time, and

2. *Key idea.* This might also be thought of as a "focus," "thesis statement," or, as I explain it to my students "the most important point that you feel needs to be taught about this particular topic." It is written as a complete sentence, not as an infinitive phrase that passes itself off as an "instructional objective."<sup>283</sup> We usually begin with a key term as the subject and then develop individual predication based upon the "application" that that term has for the student's self-understanding.<sup>284</sup> For example, in that 10th-Grade English class, the key term might be "honor" and its key idea might be, "As it is portrayed in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, the concept of public honor excludes women."

3. *The Question(s) to which this lesson (or key idea) is an answer.* As we have seen, this dialectical "logic of the question and answer" is a fundamental part of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. In practice, this approach does two things: First, it helps the student to clarify his or her thinking about the key idea. For instance, if we return to the above example of a key idea, a student struggling with predication can begin to think differently about the key term, "honor" (which the student has selected but "doesn't know what to say about

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communicative discourse, i.e., historicity, linguisticity, and dialectic.

<sup>283</sup>I have found this -- the most critical task in the planning stage -- to be the most difficult and frustrating for the students. It is the same conflict that the writing teacher runs into when trying to get the student to "focus the argument" or to "come up with clear thesis statement." Notice here how similar rhetoric, hermeneutics, and the educational experience can really be. In my view, this goes back to the ontological linguisticity of philosophical hermeneutics.

<sup>284</sup>We are again reminded here of *Women's Ways* "constructed knowledge" and Gadamer's insight that "the central problem of hermeneutics" is the "problem of *application*, which is to be found in all understanding" (*Truth and Method*, 307).

it"), if he or she is asked about what question might have given rise to the interest in "honor" in the first place. The student's first response is predictable: "What is honor?" But here the conversation can take its first turn towards "constructed knowing." With carefully modulated and thoughtful querying on the supervising teacher's part, this Socratic questioning can turn into a true dialectical and hermeneutical experience, which, as we have been arguing, is the educational experience itself. Secondly, the question can open up the student's thinking beyond the single lesson plan to thoughtful consideration about the larger unit that embodies this particular idea. By means of the same dialectic used for clarifying the key idea, this further widening of the student's horizons can provide a deeper understanding of the nature of curriculum and tradition.

4. *Curriculum.* Once the student has decided on the lesson plan, a plausible unit within which the lesson would appear, and when that particular lesson might be taught during the year, he or she must compare that information with what the actual curriculum guide (or comparable substitute) calls for. This must be a guide from the school district identified by the student as the location for his or her teaching assignment (#1). What the student usually finds out is that a) the curriculum guide is sketchy at best, if it exists at all, or b) the curriculum guide describes things differently than what the student conceived them to be. Either way, this "encounter" becomes a hermeneutical experience of negation which encourages the student to

rethink his or her preconceptions of what teaching is "really like" and to begin to question his or her understanding of where knowledge actually comes from.

5. *Student preconceptions.* Having determined what will be taught, where it will be taught, and when it will be taught, the student teacher now must consider what preconceptions his or her students might bring with them to class (prior knowledge of the subject and prejudgments related to the content as well as to the immediate life-world). The student teacher, for example, would need to check the curriculum guide to see what the students had studied the previous year and are currently studying in their other courses, especially in history. He or she must also make some reasonable decisions about what cultural prejudgments these students are bringing to the subject and to the class as a community. (This is a reflexive act in that it tells the student teacher something about his or her own prejudgments.) For instance, in our Shakespeare example, the student teacher might report that this is the second Shakespeare play that the students have read and that they are currently studying the historical Caesar in their required World History class, etc. It might also be apparent to the student teacher that since the community is small and culturally closed, the students might have certain traditional, patriarchal notions of a woman's role, etc. Given these investigations, the student teacher is required to offer suggestions (during his or her introduction to the lesson) as to how these prejudgments might be

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turned to an advantage.

6. *Procedure*. This is a detailed description of how the lesson will actually be taught. It requires the usual explanation of logistics, timeframe, and materials needed, but what sets it apart from the traditional lesson plan is that the activity must involve the students in some form of "creative negativity" and must prepare specific questions that anticipate the dialectic which will result from that experience of negation. One possibility for doing this in our Caesar example -- given our key idea about "honor" and the exclusion of women -- would be to provide for the students some examples of "honorable women" who have persevered through history, but simultaneously to underline the irony in Antony's famous speech about "honorable men." Questions, then, might relate to what "honor" means to each student, and why or why not that definition could include women.

7. *Evaluation*. The traditional approaches to testing are discouraged in favor of the hermeneutical approaches to rhetoric and writing.<sup>285</sup> For example, the student teacher is required to develop a writing activity that addresses the hermeneutical problem of application. How does this portrayal of honor, for example, bridge history and speak to us today?

8. *Bibliography*. Each lesson plan must be thoroughly documented.

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<sup>285</sup>See especially the work of Crusius, Kinneavy, and Berthoff. For full citations see Works Consulted.



The remainder of this chapter is my own application of this process, which is also an application of our thesis. My purpose in developing this particular three-lesson unit on trait genderization and communication focuses on the hope that by having some exposure to the so-called "cultural differences" that exist between men and women, and by coming to some realization about the pervasive institutionalization of power structures that continues to dominate those cultural differences, my students will be able to have that hermeneutical experience of negation by recognizing the biases that have prejudiced society against women for what they are, "regimes of power," and that their own preconceptions about gender might be nothing more than groundless stereotypes.

My reasoning towards the formulation of a key idea followed the proposition that research into the ways that individuals perceive the world and themselves -- the ways that men and women come to know things -- suggests that cognition might follow a sequence of stages which leads to intellectual and moral development but that those cultural stages are, in turn, affected by long-term power structures that have been established by the ruling majority. Because of inequities inherent in socialized structures of power, students do not have equal opportunities to develop according to stages of normal intellectual and moral growth. And because women have been the victims of social inequities, the apparent cultural differences in their intellectual development and in their ability to communicate with

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men are oftentimes misinterpreted as being representative of an essential inferiority to men.

The **first lesson plan** might best be entitled the "Cognitive Perspective," and its **key idea** formulated as, "Developmental theory has established men's experience and competence as a baseline against which both men's and women's development is then judged, often to the detriment of misreading women."<sup>286</sup> The **required texts** are: 1) Mary Belenky, et al. *Women's Ways of Knowing* (especially the Introduction, Chapter 1 and Chapter 10); 2) Blythe Clinchy, "On Critical Thinking and Connected Knowing" *Liberal Education* (Nov/Dec 1989) (Class Handout); 3) D. N. Gollnick and P. C. Chinn, *Multicultural Education in a Pluralist Society* (especially Chapter 4); 4) J. Kurfiss, "Developmental Theories, or What Happens to Students in College?" *Teaching Professor* (April 1990): 3-4 (Class Handout); and 5) William Perry, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development* (Figures 1 and 2 as a class handout). Among the **students' preconceptions and prior knowledge** will be: 1) a familiarity with the Clinchy, Kurfiss, and Perry handouts, and they will have read Chapter 4 in Gollnick and Chinn; 2) Except for the above articles, students will not have prior familiarity with the Perry or the Belenky et al. studies; however, most will be slightly familiar with Piaget and will have taken the required Educational Psychology course; 3) Many male students will have stereotypical male opinions

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<sup>286</sup>Belenky, et al., 7.

about women and cross-gender communication; 4) Some males (and females) will be resistant to "feminist attempts to force political correctness on them."

**The procedure** opens with a brief summary of the study which forms the basis for *Women's Ways*. An overhead transparency "Fact Sheet" guides this background data presentation. Next, the students are engaged in a discussion about the "stages" themselves, and the Kurfiss/Perry handouts guide this segment of the introduction which runs approximately 30 minutes. For the next 15 minutes the students begin to work collaboratively in four groups. Each group is assigned one of the four "perspectives" identified in *Women's Ways* and summarized by Kurfiss. Their assignment is to define "Art" (this could be any thought-provoking key term or concept), as it would be defined by someone from that particular perspective, and each group must provide justification for their definition. Because this is typically a class which meets three times each week for fifty minutes each session, this first meeting ends here with the students organized into their four groups and informed of the activity.

The class reconvenes and for the first 30 minutes is involved in the assignment. Reporting and discussing the "definitions" take up the next 20 minutes. After the activity has been completed, the students are given a writing assignment. They are asked to write a two-page paper (due next class meeting) on the following topic: "Discuss your own learning experiences at Simpson College in terms of 'connected

knowing' and 'separate knowing.' From your own male/female point of view, what effect did those experiences have on your understanding of gender difference and inherent classroom biases against women?"

(This assignment accounts for the issues raised in the Clinchy handout.) Finally the students are asked to write a "one-minute paper."<sup>287</sup>

The **second lesson plan** we can call "The Sociolinguistic Perspective," and its **key idea** can be stated as follows: "A cross-cultural approach to gender differences in conversational style differs from the work on gender and language which claims that conversations between men and women break down because men seek to dominate women. . . . The effect of dominance is not always the result of an intention to dominate."<sup>288</sup> The **required texts** are: 1) Gollnick & Chinn's *Multicultural Education in a Pluralist Society*, Chapter 15; 2) Deborah Tannen, *You Just Don't Understand*; 3) Peggy Taylor, "'Can We Talk?' An Interview with Deborah Tannen," *New Age Journal* (Nov/Dec 1990): 31-33 (Class Handout); and 4) "What's Your Gender Communications Quotient?" an unpublished "quiz" similar to a cultural literacy approach to gender and communication. At this point,

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<sup>287</sup>Described in Richard Light, "The Harvard Assessment Seminars," (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1991). At the end of each class I ask my students to write out, anonymously, on a half-sheet of paper (that I salvage from the recycling bins), answers to the following questions: "What is the one big thing I learned during this class?" and "What is the one big question that still remains?" The one-minute paper provides a quick means of assessment as to where my lesson's emphases fell, and it also provides a helpful and interesting means for beginning the next class meeting. By mentioning the things learned and by asking the questions that still remained, we as a class can review the previous lesson, a variety of opinions, and also take up issues that remained problematic.

<sup>288</sup>Deborah Tannen, *You Just Don't Understand* (New York: Morrow, 1990), 18.

the **students' preconceptions and prior knowledge** will be that 1) they have read key chapters from *You Just Don't Understand*, Chapter 4 in Gollnick and Chinn, and the interview with Deborah Tannen; 2) Students will know the difference between "connected knowing" and "separate knowing"; 3) Students will be familiar with the implications of cultural feminism; and 4) Many students will still believe that women by nature "talk all the time."

The **procedure** begins after the first 10 minutes of review based on selected one-minute paper comments from the *Women's Ways* class. The students then "take" the "What's Your Gender Communications Quotient?" quiz, and after talking over the implications of the "answers" to the quiz, the class turns its attention to the "Fact Sheet" overhead transparency which summarizes the sociolinguistic model used by Deborah Tannen. Like the first lesson, time usually runs out at this point, so following the "Fact Sheet" introduction, the remaining time is allotted for instructions and organizing for the main activity. The next class meeting is given over to the primary activity, and the class gets into the 4 groups assigned the previous meeting. These groups are different from the previous groups and are made up of approximately 5-6 students per group with an equal distribution of male and female students. Before the groups are formed, I ask 2 male students and 2 female students (without the others knowing) to "be" sociolinguists modeled after the methodology used by Deborah Tannen. Each student-

sociolinguist becomes something like participant-observer and is assigned to a group where he or she will observe the conversational styles of the males and females in each group. The groups are then instructed to engage in a discussion about a specific topic given to them, a topic that will be intentionally controversial (e.g., "The decision to change the name of the Simpson mascot from 'Redmen' to 'Storm' was motivated only by concern over being politically correct"). The groups "go at it" for about 30 minutes. After the discussion period ends, the "sociolinguists" report to the class their observations and attempt to align those observations with specific findings by Tannen (rapport/report talk, independence/intimacy, one-upsmanship, cooperation, etc). The class as a whole is encouraged to take part in this "debriefing" exercise. The final five minutes will be set aside for the assignment of a two-page paper: "How do the key concepts of understanding and connectedness compare with one another in the sociolinguistic model and in the cognitive model?" And also for a one-page paper that will serve as an introduction to Tavis book: "Based on what we have read and talked about up to this point, do you believe that essential differences exist in the natures of men and women? Why and/or why not?" Lastly, the students write their one-minute papers.

The **third lesson plan** is called "The Power Perspective" and takes as its **key idea(s)** the following: 1) "The philosophy of cultural feminism has functioned to keep women focused on their allegedly

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stable and innate personality qualities, instead of on what it would take to have a society based on the qualities we value in both sexes"; and 2) "To free oneself from the [white male club] and to change it, one must question its assumptions and carve out a new self-understanding -- both individually and as a member of a group."<sup>289</sup>

The **required texts** are: 1) Caryn M. Musil, ed. "The Courage to Question." *Executive Summary of the AAC Report on Women's Studies and Student Learning*, 1992 (Class Handout); 2) Carol Tavis, *The Mismeasure of Woman* (Introduction, Chapters 2, and Chapter 8); and 3) Robert Terry, "The White Male Club" (Class Handout). The students will have the following **preconceptions and prior knowledge**: 1) Students will have read Terry's article and the readings from Tavis' book; 2) Some male and female students will take offense at the idea of the "White Male Club"; 3) Most of the students will have come to an understanding of "cultural feminism"; 4) Students will have read the AAC Report Summary and will understand the scope of Women's Studies at the postsecondary level and that what we have been doing is not some fragmented version of "political correctness."

The **procedure** begins as it did with the previous lesson: The students will begin with a review of one-minute paper questions and comments, and then they will take turns reading their one-page papers on the question of the essential natures of men and women.

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<sup>289</sup>1) Carol Tavis, *The Mismeasure of Woman* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 332; and 2) Robert Terry, "The White Male Club," *Civil Rights Digest* (1974): 20.

This reading with the accompanying discussion takes most of the time, but before the end of class, the students are introduced to the "Tavris/Terry Model," again, by way of an overhead transparency. At the beginning of the next class, the students are divided again into four different groups. Each group is assigned the following two questions for their discussion: 1) "What evidence from your own personal experience can you cite to support Terry's claim for the existence of a "White Male Club?" and 2) "What examples from your own educational experience (elementary, secondary, and post-secondary) can you cite in support of Tavris' claim that men have been traditionally 'the measure of all things' and that women have been judged according to that norm?" This discussion takes the full class time, so at the following meeting, each group reports to the class and comparisons/contrasts, application, and contextualization cues help them in developing a meaningful dialogue. Because this activity takes most of the class time, the last ten minutes is set aside for the writing of the one-minute paper and to the assignment of a two-page paper: "Based on your reading of *Women's Ways* and *You Just Don't Understand*, do you agree or disagree with Carol Tavris' critique of those works as examples of a 'flawed' cultural feminism? Draw on your own experience and from your thoughts about the essential nature of men and women."

In conclusion, the success of this unit depends on the applicability of two assumptions about the interrelationship of



hermeneutics, multicultural education, teaching, and "constructed knowledge." First, as James Banks explains it, "The challenge that teachers face is how to make effective instructional use of the personal and cultural knowledge of students while at the same time helping them to reach beyond their own cultural boundaries."<sup>290</sup> In the jargon of philosophical hermeneutics, this amounts to an affirmation of Gadamer's insight that "it is not so much our judgments as it is our prejudices that constitute our being" and that "the nature of the hermeneutical experience is not that something is outside and desires admission. Rather, we are possessed by something and precisely by means of it we are opened up for the new, the different, the true."<sup>291</sup> For Gadamer, prejudgments are what Harold Bloom calls the "hidden roads between poems" that get us into the hermeneutical circle, but, as we have seen, the circle is not a closed circuit. Rather, it is more like a spiral wherein occurs the "fusion of horizons," the dialectical interplay of which widens the spiral of that circle toward an infinity of new experiences. Banks, having made this point about what he calls "cultural knowledge," then reinforces his argument (and the rationale for my unit) by directing our attention to the role that "transformative knowledge" also plays in multicultural education. He says, "Transformative academic knowledge challenges some of the key assumptions that mainstream scholars make about the nature of

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<sup>290</sup>James Banks, "The Canon Debate, Knowledge Construction, and Multicultural Education," *Educational Researcher* (June/July 1993): 8.

<sup>291</sup>H-G. Gadamer, "The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem," in *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, ed. David Linge (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 9.

knowledge."<sup>292</sup> And here, for "transformative knowledge," we could substitute "constructed knowledge" without missing a beat.

The second assumption is one made by Charles Payne in his article "Multicultural Education: A Natural Way to Teach." Basically making the same point that Banks makes in regard to process, Payne centralizes his concern on the strengths of a culture or cultures: "It would appear that natural skills and abilities which have been acquired because of a certain lifestyle or culture would be more useful in teaching when viewed as cultural strengths and not weaknesses."<sup>293</sup> Again, *Women's Ways*' "connected teaching," Gadamer's "preconceptions," and Gallagher's version of a "local hermeneutics" all seem to converge with this underlying assumption about the role of multicultural education in modern educational theory and practice. It was this striking compatibility that confirmed my decision to begin with this particular course as the most compatible with our thesis.

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<sup>292</sup>Banks, 9.

<sup>293</sup>Charles R. Payne, "Multicultural Education: A Natural Way to Teach" *Contemporary Education* 54, no. 2 (Winter 1983): 98-104.

## CHAPTER 7

## CONCLUSION

The book will not appeal to teachers who prefer to work with manuals and guides and a rigid syllabus. There are no special "study questions" because the whole book is a study question.

-- Ann Berthoff, *Forming, Thinking, Writing*

Thus all useful education begins with and circles back to historical understanding. Since time gives knowledge a narrative structure, self-knowledge means storytelling. And when the self knowledge is collective, the storytelling is shared. Education is systematic storytelling.

-- Benjamin Barber, *An Aristocracy of Everyone*

Ann Berthoff's characterization of her book as "one big study question" is a practical way to describe this dissertation and its investment in what Gadamer calls the "horizon of the question."<sup>294</sup> If we think of the dissertation in this way, that is, as an answer to a question, the question that lies behind it is "How does one go about 'making' a human being?"<sup>295</sup> However, as Gadamer goes on to point

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<sup>294</sup>Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 370. Gadamer says that "a person who wants to understand must question what lies behind what is said. He [sic] must understand it as an answer to a question." He goes on to say that "If we go back *behind* what is said, then we inevitably ask questions *beyond* what is said. We understand the sense of the text only by acquiring the horizon of the question -- a horizon that, as such, necessarily includes other possible answers." In Chapter 6, I describe how this "logic of the question" can be applied to the preparation of lesson plans, especially in teacher education courses.

<sup>295</sup>As far as the "meeting" of *Emile* and *Frankenstein* goes, implicit in this "making" are the divergent paths taken by the educational "organicists" (Emileians, if you will) and the "technicists" (Frankensteinians). The choice, figuratively speaking, is between "cultivating" or reproduction, on the one hand, and "building" or production, on the other. Dewey calls the former "growth" and Skinner names the latter "technology." The "question horizon" itself begs the question of monstrosity, e.g., "How does one go about making an 'anomalous' human being?" Implicit in the discussion of monstrosity in Chapter 1 is that this "making" does not so much involve a Frankensteinian laboratory as it does an "exemplar mediated prejudice," i.e., the way that people "see" other people (women and people of color, for example) as being "subhuman."

out, because the meaning of a work is relative to the question to which it is an answer, its meaning necessarily exceeds what is said in it. This means that although our "horizon of the question" might be discursively straightforward enough, the answer to which the dissertation attempts to give meaning "exceeds" what is said in it. Thus we arrive at the dissertation not only as an elaboration of the thesis that the educational experience is hermeneutical,<sup>296</sup> but as an attempt to answer other key questions to which this situation has given rise. Among those other questions are the following: "What sort of educational experience is contingent upon a philosophy of education that is essentially hermeneutical?" "What is it about Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics [or in Gallagher's terms a "moderate hermeneutics"] that precludes the other hermeneutical theories as the basis for a theory of education, and how, exactly, will it address the problem with which this hermeneutical approach to education is concerned?" And given that the educational experience is hermeneutical, "In what ways can hermeneutics be complemented so as to account for gender issues, and how can the critique of gender be complemented by hermeneutics, reciprocally, so that one does not supercede the other?" And finally, "How plausible is this philosophy of education as a counterweight to the monomethodologism of modern educational practice?" The variation on this theme that formulates

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<sup>296</sup>As we have seen, this is a thesis given its fullest expression by Shaun Gallagher in his *Hermeneutics and Education* (1992).

the dissertation's thesis is that the educational experience is, in fact, a continuous reconstruction of the complementary reciprocation between the ontology of philosophical hermeneutics and the epistemology of *Women's Ways of Knowing*.<sup>297</sup>

The reason for taking this particular approach is that it offers a plausible corrective to what we have identified as the most serious problem faced by modern educational theory and practice, which is essentially that it has become based upon a social engineering model informed by the idea that method, especially scientific method and *techne*, is the road to truth. As we explained this problem in Chapter 4, it is essentially that education has naively surrendered to the social engineering model of the social sciences, which, in turn, so as not to forfeit its rightful place on the high road to truth, appropriated it from the Enlightenment model of the natural sciences. This mutated conception of education has collapsed practical judgment or what Aristotle calls *phronesis* into technical know-how or *techne*. We have explained that practical judgment belongs to the realm of "tact," of the "extrascientific experiences" that Gadamer associates with the four "guiding concepts of humanism": "Bildung," "taste," "sensus communis," and "judgment." And that this is also where Gadamer connects with *Women's Ways*, for these are the key concepts that best illustrate the impropriety of method, not only in the human

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<sup>297</sup>The philosophical hermeneutics referred to is the philosophy of ontological understanding developed by the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer and described in his *Truth and Method* (1960), and the epistemology is that described by Mary Belenky et al in their study of the cognitive development of women, *Women's Ways of Knowing* (1986).

sciences but also in the course of everyday human experience and interaction, as well as in the activity of what *Women's Ways* calls "constructed knowing" (and "connected teaching"). As we have shown, this impropriety of method comes about because method is supposedly derived from a "universal" principle, and the application of that method would be invariant regardless of the situation, which is to say, "tactless" and therefore inappropriate. To make this point more clearly, we cited the example of an individual who is taught a second language from a series of outdated audiotapes and who has had no other contact with that language. The result would be mere parroting, i.e., an "uncultivated" use of the language. The language user would have no "sixth sense" of *how* to use the language at the right time in the right place. In other words, the parroting would be applied *techne* without concern for the practical judgment of *phronesis*. It would not require any sense of taste, common sense, or practical judgment for its application, which is to say that "tact," because it is *not* a *techne*, cannot be taught. And as we saw in Chapter 2, if we take this example as a "microtext" for the whole of our modern technological culture, and specifically for modern educational practices, this is the situation that we must come to terms with, for as we are all aware, "method" in this context can be synonymous with an abusive and methodical, negative prejudice.

Recognizing this as the problem (or the question) for which this dissertation offers a possible solution (is an answer to) is the first

step. That first step, then, requires an early formulation of the solution itself, which is fairly obvious: People need to know how to use *techne* at the right time in the right place, they need to develop *phronesis*. In the jargon of our thesis, the way to do this is in a kind of reflexive complementarity between what Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics calls "tact" and what *Women's Ways* conceives of as "constructed knowledge." Understood in this way, we arrive at our aim for education: the inculcation of "tact" through *Bildung* by recognizing that the educational experience is the continuous reconstruction of the complementary reciprocation between the ontology of philosophical hermeneutics and the epistemology of *Women's Ways of Knowing*.<sup>298</sup>

The more complete solution to this problem, we have argued, relies on three areas of compatibility that exist between traditional educational theory, Gadamer's hermeneutics, and the thesis as we are proposing it. These are the key concepts of "understanding," "experience," and *Bildung*. This compatibility, as it has been outlined primarily in Chapters 2-4, is defined by the ontological understanding of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, the pragmatic experience of John Dewey's theory of education, and *Bildung* as the "constructed knowledge" of *Women's Ways of Knowing*.

For Gadamer understanding is not simply empathy. It is

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<sup>298</sup>In this regard, Gadamer hints at the dissertation's implicit theme of monstrosity: "When a naive faith in scientific method denies the existence of effective history, there can be an actual deformation of knowledge. We are familiar with this from the history of science, where it appears as the irrefutable proof of something that is obviously false" (*Truth and Method*, 301).

characterized by historicity, linguisticity, and dialectic. Indeed, understanding always involves more than merely reconstructing the past "world" to which the work belongs. Hermeneutical understanding always retains the consciousness that the interlocutor too belongs to that world, and correlatively, that the work too belongs to his or her world. Because understanding constitutes the movement of Being itself, we can never presume to think that a "correct" meaning or intention is discoverable by some innate faculty that allows us to identify with another person or with another time period. The most we can hope to achieve is that we remain open to the other person's or text's meaning by situating that other meaning in relation to the whole of our own meanings or ourselves in relation to it. In fact, the task of hermeneutical understanding is to question a text and to be prepared for it to have something to tell us in return. Thus a hermeneutically trained consciousness must be, from the start, sensitive to the text's "otherness," which involves the foregrounding of one's own preconceptions and prejudices so that the text can present itself in all its "otherness" and thus assert its own truth against those preconceptions. It is what Gadamer calls the "tyranny of hidden prejudices" that makes us deaf to what speaks to us in tradition.

For our purposes, the historicity of understanding might be best summed up with Gadamer's emphasis that understanding is primarily a process of participation as a constant mediation of past and



present, what *Women's Ways* calls "connected knowing." It is this mediation of present and past that Gadamer calls a "fusion of horizons" and by which he further defines understanding. And contemporaneous with this "fusion of horizons" is the linguistical dimension of Gadamer's hermeneutical understanding. And Gadamer is unequivocal about this when he asserts that "Being that can be understood is language"<sup>299</sup> or that "understanding and interpretation are ultimately the same thing." And this linguisticality, in turn, bears directly on the historicity and the dialectical nature of understanding. In other words, what is true of understanding is just as true of language. Neither can be grasped simply as a fact or as an object that can be empirically investigated by means of what is in *Women's Ways'* terminology, "separate knowing." But the educational implications of Gadamer's hermeneutical understanding go beyond its compatibility with *Women's Ways*. This hermeneutical "understanding" we have maintained has strong affinities with what we have referred to as contemporary "tacit hermeneutical pedagogies." Representative of these are "the pedagogies of understanding" (Perkins, Cohen, Egan), "the pedagogy of care" (Noddings), "connected teaching" (Belenky et al), "dialogic teaching" (Reinsmith), "constructivism" (Brooks and Brooks), educational theories and practices that are explicitly and/or implicitly derived from Gadamer's hermeneutics, and "the pedagogy of the oppressed"

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<sup>299</sup> *Truth and Method*, 474, 388.

(Freire). Finally, the multicultural implications of Gadamer's hermeneutical understanding are implicit in its inescapable capacity for a "fusion of horizons."

"Experience," as the second of the three affinities, was advanced in Chapter 3 with the assumption that Gadamer's hermeneutical "experience of negation" and its concomitant "fusion of horizons" are, indeed, compatible with John Dewey's insistence that a philosophy of education must rely on a theory of experience, and that "philosophy is the theory of education in its most general phases." But if Dewey's philosophy of education, according to our argument, were based upon the hermeneutical experience, it was not to be thought of as a prescription or procedure for a new educational methodology. Rather, in Gadamer's terms, it would be the art of employing methods where they belong, not where they don't belong. This hermeneutical approach to Dewey established the following theses: 1) Dewey's "social movement circle" can be viewed as a variant of the hermeneutical circle and that that structure is the structure of experience. 2) Dewey's observation that since the objectives of learning are in the future and its immediate materials are in present experience, they can be carried into effect only in the degree that "present experience is stretched, as it were, backward," expanding into the future only as it is also enlarged to take in the past,<sup>300</sup> describes hermeneutical historicity, linguisticity, and

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<sup>300</sup>Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 77.

dialectic. 3) This "hermeneutical experience" also describes a Deweyan version of Gadamer's "fusion of horizons" and its direct relationship to understanding. 4) Dewey's prescription for the *situation* as dependent upon the two inseparable principles of "interaction" and "continuity" -- what he calls the "longitudinal and lateral aspects of experience" -- is another way of getting at Gadamerian dialectic and historicity. And 5) Dewey's use of the word "reconstruction" in his lifelong insistence on education as the "continuous reconstruction of experience" is not synonymous with *repeatability*, as in the positivist's sense of a capacity to *repeat* an experiment for verifiability. Rather, as Richard Rorty has argued, it can be best understood to mean *redescription*, what Gadamer characterizes as "an ongoing reacquisition that proceeds into infinity." One major implication of this argument is that if Gadamer's hermeneutics can supplement Dewey's theory of experience and thus underwrite the compatibility of a continental philosophical hermeneutics with a philosophy of education in a liberal democracy, then other aspects of Dewey's Americanized Hegelianism could very well be reexamined in the light of what Richard Bernstein calls the New Constellation and the "grand Either/Or" that is its universe.<sup>301</sup>

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<sup>301</sup>In his "Introduction" to *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993), Bernstein explains why he chose this metaphor. The explanation is in the context of his primary concern with probing "the grand Either/Or: *either* there is a rational grounding of the norms of critique *or* the conviction that there is such a rational grounding is itself a self-deceptive illusion": "The reason why I find this metaphor so fertile is because I want to show that our "modern/postmodern" situation or predicament is one that defies and resists any and all attempts of reduction to 'a common denominator, essential core, or generative first principle.' 'Constellation' is deliberately intended to displace Hegel's master metaphor of *Aufhebung*. For, as I will argue, although we cannot (and should not) give up the promise and demand for reconciliation -- a reconciliation

Such a reading of Dewey's theory of education in terms of his own persistent preoccupation with Either/Or's would reveal -- as Richard Rorty has shown -- not so much a radical "postmodernism" but a hermeneutics of education that makes philosophical sense out of those Deweyan concepts like "experience," "growth," "science," and "method" that have been misunderstood and misapplied in the educational context for generations.

*Bildung*, the third and final node of complementarity between the educational experience and philosophical hermeneutics, is the German word in Gadamer's hermeneutics that is roughly synonymous with the process of educative acculturation. As a third key concept in our argument for an alternative to a "technology of teaching," we discussed it in Chapter 4 in terms of *Women's Ways'* "constructed knowledge" as the "meeting" of hermeneutical understanding and experience, i.e., the two previous chapters. What we proposed in that chapter is that our emphasis is not on the postmodern as such, nor is it on a postmodern critical feminism, but we were careful not to dismiss these deconstructive efforts out of hand. Rather, we attempted to build on the terrain cleared off by the critical theorists so that our approach would be more pragmatically directed in the

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achieved by what Hegel calls 'determinate negation,' I do not think we can any longer responsibly claim that there is or can be a final reconciliation -- an *Aufhebung* in which all difference, otherness, opposition and contradiction are reconciled. There are always unexpected contingent ruptures that dis-rupt the project of reconciliation. The changing elements of the new constellation resist such reduction. What is 'new' about this constellation is the growing awareness of the depth of radical instabilities. We have to learn to think and act in the "in-between" interstices of forced reconciliations and radical dispersion" (8-9).

sense that *Women's Ways* can be understood as complementing philosophical hermeneutics (and vice versa) in much the same way that we argued in Chapter 3 for philosophical hermeneutics as supplementing Dewey's theory of experience. To put this another way, with our discussion of *Bildung*, we have attempted to bring the critical theorists and the pragmatists into the same conversation, and as a variation on how *Women's Ways* conceptualizes "connected teaching," this complementarity can provide an overflowing source for practical applications in the classroom. (In Chapter 6 we have demonstrated how one area of that potentiality -- multicultural nonsexist education -- can be developed into a "unit plan.") What must be kept in mind here, though, is that this is not a one-sided operation. Philosophical hermeneutics, for example, will not be telling *Women's Ways* (or vice versa) what to do in order to effect change within the dominant power structure. What emerged in the course of this argument was a kind of reciprocating complementarity or a "fusion of horizons" by which philosophical hermeneutics meets certain needs of *Women's Ways*, and *Women's Ways* reciprocates. The subsequent widening of horizons was what we have referred to as *Bildung*. In the educational context, the implications of this fusing become evident with *Women's Ways*' advocacy of "connected teaching" and the necessary roles that understanding and experience, for example, play in the development of that pedagogical and epistemological mode, especially in the multicultural nonsexist classroom.

The point of our proposed reciprocation is that philosophical hermeneutics, complemented by *Women's Ways*, can account for the gender inequities that are the direct concerns of feminist thought and, by implication, the direct concerns of educational theory, and that this can be effected without slipping into a feminist essentialism. And, as we have tried to further demonstrate in Chapter 5, we have taken this one step farther by assimilating metaphoricity into the concept of *Bildung*, thus demonstrating the potential for a feminist rhetoric immanent in this particular fusion of horizons. In brief, we agree with Gadamer that *Bildung*, not method, best explains the nature of hermeneutic understanding. We then take the position that *Bildung* also displays the structure of metaphor and that there is therefore a real sense in which we can say understanding is itself fundamentally metaphorical. For example, the dialectical structure of "departure" *from* and "return" *to* self that defines *Bildung* can also be viewed as the circular structure of hermeneutic understanding and metaphor. Moments of *Bildung* -- or what Dewey called "growth" -- occur when the interpreter (or student) is altered not so much by acquiring a new piece of information but by assimilating a "new" horizon (usually through the hermeneutic experience of negation) and, accordingly, learns to understand differently. This new understanding, in turn, initiates a new self-understanding which, in our view, defines a reciprocal transference like that which characterizes interactive metaphor and Gadamer's "fusion of horizons." The chapter concludes

by leading into what can be construed as Part 2 of the thesis, which is a metaphorical treatment (Chapter 5) of the three previous chapters, and a practical treatment of the same (Chapter 6).

In Chapter 5 we turned to literary texts, *Frankenstein* and *Emile*, as a way to further the inquiry into the contingencies of education, hermeneutics, trait-genderization, language, and metaphor. Actually, one might think of the theme of "meeting," which Chapter 5 makes explicit, as a further reaffirmation of Gadamer's thesis of *Truth and Method*, where he says that "the thing which hermeneutics teaches us is to see through the dogmatism of asserting an opposition and separation between the ongoing, natural 'tradition' and the reflective appropriation of it."<sup>302</sup> As an exemplum or metaphor for the complementary reciprocation of philosophical hermeneutics and *Women's Ways*, the "meeting" of *Frankenstein* and *Emile* is an answer to the question, "What would it mean if the educational experience were fundamentally metaphoristic?" And what our answer tries to suggest for education is that the interactive process of learning something new while admitting we must always start with what and how we already know is, in fact, the process of metaphoricality and the structure immanent in *Bildung*. If this understanding of the educational experience were recognized as the ontological basis for learning, what implications would this have for the behavioral objectives model approach to education that is the

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<sup>302</sup> *Truth and Method*, 28.

foundational basis for most of the pre-college and postsecondary educational systems in today's society? Wouldn't it require a significant rethinking of the infrastructure of teacher preparation programs?

What we have tried to demonstrate with our reading of these two texts as a metaphor for that metaphoricity, i.e., our thesis, is that the educational experience begins with an anomaly (Frankenstein's monster) revealed through a hermeneutical "experience of negation," which is that kind of experience that results in the opposite of what was intended, being this opposite usually is inexplicable, given the experiencer's preconceptual framework. What is then required in order to make sense of things is a metaphorical relation (*Emile*) that might build on what is familiar in that personal forestructure and thus generate an interpretation of the anomaly. The testing of the validity of that interpretation is the continuous reconstruction of the complementary reciprocation between the ontology of philosophical hermeneutics and the epistemology of *Women's Ways of Knowing*. What this activity turns up for us in the meeting of *Frankenstein* and *Emile* is that where they truly meet is in their sexism (Sophie's "place" in society and Victor's refusal to make a mate for his creature), and the educational corrective that follows suit is a transumptive or metaphorical understanding of the "tyrrany of the hidden prejudice," so that what we "learn" is that education cannot be education for liberty without this "new" fusion of horizons which



has been effected historically, linguistically, and dialectically.

The chapter is, in effect, an exemplum for the previous three chapters and points the way to further implications having to do with understanding, experience, and *Bildung* as educational principles. This is to say that the "meeting" or "fusion of horizons" of *Emile* and *Frankenstein* is illustrative of: 1) the fundamental metaphoricity immanent in our thesis and, by extension, in the educational experience; 2) the possibility for a "two-sex society" where educational theory and philosophy place males and females in one world -- a world in which the sexes live together independently; 3) the hermeneutical interactivity of understanding, experience, and *Bildung*; and 4) the linguistic, historical, and dialectical characteristics peculiar to philosophical hermeneutics. But this "meeting" was not "arranged" so that it follows a critical or textual approach to the works themselves. What "method" there is follows from Richard Rorty's point that a text is not *about* something but should be used *for* something. Or in his words, "the distinction is between getting it right and making it useful." He expands this view by saying that "Such criticism uses the author or text not as a specimen reiterating a type but as an occasion for changing a previously accepted taxonomy, or for putting a new twist on a previously told story."<sup>303</sup> Generally, the "new twist" that Chapter 5 sets in motion has a lot to do with how we think about the educational

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<sup>303</sup>The citations are from Stephan Collini, ed., *Interpretation and Overinterpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 108.

experience and very little to do with what something "really" means.

The larger implications for the classroom teacher are taken up in the final chapter, Chapter 6, where specific lesson plans are described for a unit that was developed for a "Human Relations in Teaching" course at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, a course that is required for state teaching licensure. The emphasis here is on the promise that the thesis holds for teacher preparation courses in multicultural, nonsexist education, but the implications for the "canon debate" and the "culture wars" are unavoidable. In Chapter 2, we were introduced to what such a practice might be like as well as to what such a practice would *not* be like, namely, the behavioral objectives model of instruction. In Chapter 2 we also briefly surveyed several models of what we termed "explicit" and "tacit" hermeneutical approaches to the classroom experience, and we also saw that the "connected teaching" of *Women's Ways* with its ties to Paulo Freire's problem-posing approaches to teaching and his opposition to the "banking-concept" of teaching can also be understood as compatible with philosophical hermeneutics. We saw, too, that certain "pedagogies of understanding" and "constructivist" practices are also compatible with our thesis. Furthermore, in Chapter 3, we saw that John Dewey's theory of experience and education -- the similarities between his integrative concept of "the past of the living present" and the concept of the hermeneutical circle -- offers us another touchstone.

So although the basic, practical, pedagogical views of this thesis are not necessarily predominant views, they are themselves familiar to thoughtful students in the field. However, even for many of those thoughtful practitioners, these views have become semi-hackneyed and, accordingly, have slipped into the pejorative, dead metaphor office of educational jargon. The challenge, then, specifically for Chapter 6 and generally for the thesis as a whole is not simply to recycle or to repackage existing (or at least perceived to be existing) classroom practices under a new and "catchier" label; it is to create for the student *and* for the teacher the "edifying" open space and social hope necessary to counteract the "fear of freedom" and the defensive denials that go along with it. It is, in words that we have used previously, the challenge of pulling the plug on the "tyrannical machine" that is running our teacher preparation programs and, by extension, the majority of classrooms in today's public schools. It is the kind of tyranny that is self-perpetuating so that a postsecondary student teacher who *does* receive an "edifying" understanding of the educational experience will, during his or her practice teaching requirement, more than likely get "processed" into the machine that the teacher preparation program spent so much time theoretically deconstructing. And it goes without saying that that same machine is having the same effect on the school students themselves, thus making the machine truly tyrannical.

In the course of our thesis, this is what we have tried to portray as "monstrosity," *techne*, sexism, and as the "abuse of method" with all of the negative prejudices contingent upon that closed-mindedness. Confronting these denials, these fears of freedom and the obstacles they create is the critical challenge facing the schools and the schools of education today. How do we get students in the schools, students in the academy, and teachers in the same to recognize these denials for what they are -- self-deceptions about "true" motives? How do you tell an experienced teacher that the resistance she is offering to "that old Progressive stuff" has everything to do with stereotypy and an unfounded motive to escape from freedom and nothing to do with the nature of learning and the educational experience? How do you tell this to student teachers? The task of this thesis is to suggest that a "fusing" of philosophical hermeneutics and *Women's Ways* provides an ontological way of thinking about the educational experience, and what this means in terms of classroom practice is that the responsibility of the teacher is nothing less than getting students to understand who they *are* by acknowledging who they have been and who they will be, and that this Being that can be understood is language, not some "monster" created *ex nihilo* by a mistaken belief in *techne* as the way to truth.

Where the thesis will contribute the most is in the teacher preparation programs at colleges and universities. By offering an

ontological alternative to a mentality that is circumscribed by the behavioral objectives model of education, the thesis may undermine the self-perpetuation of the "tyrannical machine" that "runs" modern education. For at least the past twenty years, supporting evidence, both theoretical and practical, has been growing to substantiate the claim in favor of the compatibility of Gadamer's hermeneutics and education, and for at least the past ten years the evidence has been growing in support of a complementary reciprocation between feminism and hermeneutics. The dissertation provides one of the most up-to-date sources for both the theoretical and the practical work in the hermeneutics-as-education movement.

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